

From: <wayne.marston@parl.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Inquiry into Cuts to Aboriginal Health
Date: June 10, 2015 4:17:01 PM EDT
To: <nmyers@yorku.ca>

Dear Natasha,

Thank you for taking the time to write to us about this important issue. MP Marston has read your email and has asked me to respond on his behalf.

Mr. Marston and his NDP colleagues recognize how devastating such cuts are to scientists in identifying the most pressing health issues within the communities. The pervasive and well documented problems facing the First Nations will not disappear by recklessly slashing the Aboriginal Health budgets, which is why the NDP is committed to restoring the cuts by removing the punitive 2% cap on funding increases.

Unlike the current government, an NDP government will prioritize Aboriginal issues and ensure that healthcare professionals and scientists are equipped with the ample funding to perform their jobs. Through meaningful dialogues with relevant parties within the Aboriginal communities, the NDP will work hard to undo the mistakes of the last ten years and we will not stop until equivalent levels of healthcare services are obtained.

Sincerely,

Joanne Stanojevich
Member's Assistant
Wayne Marston, M.P. | Hamilton East - Stoney Creek
NDP Critic Consular Affairs
NDP Critic for Human Rights and
Deputy Critic for Labour

1050 - 151 Sparks Street
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
(tel) 613-992-6535 | (fax) 613-992-7764
wayne.marston@parl.gc.ca | www.waynemarston.ndp.ca
UFCW 232

-----Original Message-----

From: Natasha Myers [mailto:nmyers@yorku.ca]
Sent: March 11, 2015 8:54 AM
To: Ambrose, Rona - M.P.; Ambrose, Rona :SWC; Valcourt, Bernard - Député; Freeman, Mylène - M.P.; Duncan, Kirsty - M.P.; Ashton, Niki - M.P.; Bennett, Carolyn - M.P.; Rankin, Murray - M.P.; Fry, Hedy - M.P.; Marston, Wayne - M.P.
Subject: Inquiry into Cuts to Aboriginal Health

Dear Dr. Nicolas Gilbert,

cc The Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister of Health The Honourable Dr. K. Kellie Leitch, Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women The Honourable Bernard Valcourt Minister of Aboriginal Affairs The Honourable Mylène Freeman, NDP Critic on the Status of Women The Honorable Kristy Duncan, Liberal Critic on the Status of Women The Honourable Niki Ashton, NDP Critic of Aboriginal Affairs The Honourable Carolyn Bennet, Liberal Critic of Aboriginal Affairs The Honourable Murray Rankin, NDP Critic of Health The Honourable Hedy Fry, Liberal Critic of Health The Honourable Wayne Marston, NDP

Critic of Human Rights

Your research on stillbirth and infant mortality rates within Aboriginal communities in Quebec highlights some of the unique challenges facing researchers charged with understanding and communicating health risks and best practices to Canadian Aboriginal populations. As your work points out, Aboriginal communities “are disadvantaged in relation to the rest of the province’s population” (Gilbert et al. 2015: 6) in terms of maternal and infant health. Your research comes at a troubling time when Aboriginal issues seem to be underrepresented in Canadian health research. With recent cuts to funding for the National Aboriginal Health Organization and the Institute for Aboriginal Peoples Health, it is unclear how systemic issues such as poverty, education, lack of access to public health resources, and other social determinants of health can be addressed and overcome if Aboriginal community members are not actively engaged in the research process itself.

Given your role as a senior epidemiologist working for the Public Health Agency of Canada, what are the impacts of these cuts on your efforts to include of Aboriginal expertise, opinions, lived realities, values, and traditional practices in your research? With these cuts how can we guarantee that Aboriginal community members are actively involved in the process of defining both health risks and best practices in Canadian health research?

I am writing this email as part of Write2Know (<http://write2know.ca>) a letter-writing campaign that aims to mobilize public awareness and inquiry into federal research programs. We want to let you know that we value federal science and scientists, and that our questions arise out of genuine concerns about the health and well-being of Canadians.

We are concerned about constraints on access to federal scientists and the results of their research, the elimination of essential research programs, and the closure of libraries and archives. These constraints and closures impact what Canadians can and cannot know about the health of their bodies, communities, and environments.

We are posing questions to federal scientists about their research and findings, and forwarding our letters to federal Ministers and Members of Parliament to call attention to serious gaps between scientific evidence and government policy.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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Natasha Myers
nmyers@yorku.ca
Toronto, Ontario