



**Neighbourhood
Pharmacy**
Association of Canada

Association canadienne
**des pharmacies
de quartier**

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BY EMAIL

Mr. Christian Dubé
Minister of Health and Social Services
1075, chemin Sainte-Foy, 15e étage
Québec (Québec) G1S 2M1

July 14, 2020

Dear Minister,

The Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada (Neighbourhood Pharmacies) would like to extend our congratulations regarding your appointment as Minister of Health and Social Services. We are convinced you are prepared to tackle the challenges you will encounter as Minister, particularly regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. At the heart of frontline services, our members know firsthand the extent to which the recent pandemic has created significant challenges and restructuring.

Neighbourhood Pharmacies is the respected voice and advocate for the business of pharmacy in Canada. We represent Canada's leading pharmacy brands, including chain, banner, long-term care, specialty pharmacies, grocery chains, and mass merchandisers with pharmacies. Our members actively serve patients in 11,000 communities across the country.

Pharmacies have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic from the outset, supporting Quebecers and serving their communities with tireless dedication. From our experience over the last two months, we identified additional areas where pharmacies can offer your government support in the 'new normal,' especially when considering how best to deliver healthcare close to home.

With close to 2,000 pharmacies in Quebec, we have locations in virtually every community across the province and are the first and most frequent point of contact with the healthcare system. We look forward to working with you as a collaborative partner in public health and primary care delivery in Quebec.

This year, there will be a high level of importance placed on vaccines for our most vulnerable citizens, as the potential of a second wave of COVID-19 in the fall is a distinct possibility. We are pleased to see pharmacies included in the distribution and administration of the influenza vaccine this upcoming flu season. We look forward to further leveraging our members' accessibility to best support your government's priorities to provide the highest level of care to Quebecers during this time of need.

We believe there is a real opportunity for pharmacy to deliver critical services as we transition to the pandemic recovery phase, including broader immunization services and point of care testing, to fortify Quebec's overall strategy for improved healthcare delivery. Pharmacies are

available and willing to provide the supports the health system will require as we look at new ways to respond to health crises like COVID-19.

We also believe there is an opportunity to look at renewed ways to leverage community pharmacies' infrastructure and to support your vision of a reliable, performing primary care system. All pharmacies maintain sophisticated digital records, and we feel that greater digital integration of pharmacy, primary care, and acute care will lead to improved outcomes for all Quebecois. Community pharmacies already play an essential role in assisting patients closer to home, and sharing of digital information will enhance this role.

As we confront the steady stream of challenges posed by this pandemic, we are proud of our members. They are continually rising to meet the challenges and stepping up to deliver additional support and frontline care in Quebec. With members operating in all the Canadian provinces, our Association takes note of the best practices being implemented in the pharmacy sector from one province to another. Our sector and organization stand ready to support you in your new role as you navigate the future of healthcare in the province, and how it will be delivered.

We welcome the opportunity to meet and to have a constructive dialogue with you and your team. Please do not hesitate to contact Pascal Chouinard, Account Director at H+K Stratégies (pascal.chouinard@hkstrategies.ca / 418-928-3918), to organize a meeting.

Once again, congratulations on your appointment as Minister.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hanna', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sandra Hanna, RPh.
Chief Executive Officer