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Minister Hugh J. A. Flemming, Q.C.
Minister of Health
Government of New Brunswick

August 25, 2020

Dear Minister Flemming,

I am writing on behalf of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital to request your support for Clinic 554 in Fredericton and Dr. Adrian Edgar's provision of surgical abortion services.

Our department supports reproductive choice, consistent with the position of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada. We believe in access to reproductive health care, including access to funded abortion services, consistent with the Canada Health Act. Currently surgical abortion in our region of New Brunswick is only truly accessible to affluent women who can pay locally or arrange costly transportation and lodging in another city for the procedure. Women of low socioeconomic status are often unable to access services and simply remain pregnant, at a high psychosocial and material cost to themselves and society. Our own department has accessed Dr. Edgar's expertise for complex abortion cases. We would recommend making therapeutic abortion more accessible to women by funding their provision at Clinic 554, rendering it sustainable (and more affordable for the province than in-hospital abortion elsewhere). It is inexplicable that vasectomy, a reproductive surgical procedure performed on men, is funded by medicare when performed in or out of hospital, but abortion is not.

Clinic 554 provides a unique service within all of New Brunswick. With a minimum of support, the esteemed and nationally known Dr. Edgar provides time-consuming but poorly-compensated medical care to transgender patients. These men and women have significant medical and psychosocial issues, highly complex medical and hormonal management needs, and a high risk of suicide and long-term disability. He has tremendous medical expertise and gives care that no other physicians in our community can provide. Most physicians enter medicine to help people, but Dr. Edgar *literally* saves lives by supporting these patients and the LGBTQ+ community in New Brunswick. This is in addition to the provision of a full range of reproductive services to

women in our community, including advanced contraceptive management, with private surgical abortions a relatively small but critically important and costly part of his practice. He is known for the pro-bono work that he simply cannot sustain.

To summarize, Dr. Edgar and Clinic 554 are an irreplaceable resource to the region and New Brunswick at large, both due to his reproductive health practice that includes (uncompensated) surgical abortions, and his transgender health practice. He is an esteemed clinician with expertise that would be impossible to replace as a resource for the transgender community. As a provider of abortion services he improves health care for women in our region under circumstances that are far from ideal and inconsistent with the Canada Health Act. We implore you to explore ways in which to comply with the Canada Health Act and fund abortion services at his clinic, and his practice at large. We understand that the health budget has multiple constraints, but Dr. Edgar's services are pressing and necessary and should be supported and compensated appropriately as an invaluable service to our community with a high return-on-investment relative to other programmes.

Thank you so much for taking the time to consider. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or wish to discuss further.

Kindest regards,

Christa Mullaly MD FRCSC
Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital
Fredericton, New Brunswick

cc David Coon, Leader of the Provincial Green Party of New Brunswick
cc Kris Austin, Leader of the People's Alliance Party of New Brunswick
cc Kevin Vickers, Leader of the Liberal Party of New Brunswick
cc Hon. Blaine Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick