

Sent by email

October 6, 2020

Mr. Blaine Higgs
Premier of New Brunswick
Centennial Building, PO Box 6000
Fredericton NB E3B 5H1
premier@gnb.ca

Dear Premier Higgs,

I am writing to you to express my frustration and disappointment at your government's failure to provide adequate health care services to the people of New Brunswick. The closure of Clinic 554 in Fredericton due to lack of funding leaves thousands of people without a family doctor, access to specialized LGBTQI+ care, and essential women's health services – and that is unacceptable.

New Brunswick continues to be a province where essential medical services like abortion are difficult for many to access, even though the Supreme Court of Canada removed legal limits to abortion in 1988. It is unfathomable that a province with a population close to 800,000 would restrict abortion access and care to three hospitals, two of which are in the same city.

This leaves individuals wanting an abortion who do not live in Bathurst or Moncton with no choice but to travel. Travel can further marginalize lower-income individuals who may not have access to a vehicle in an area with limited intercity public transportation. In practice, this creates an inequality of service, as women who are financially stable and can take time off work to fund the travel are able to more easily access an abortion. Abortion care should be covered by provincial health coverage to ensure equitable access for all.

Your government and the governments that came before yours have continued to uphold Regulation 84-20, despite its unquestionable violation of the *Canada Health Act* and an ongoing violation of the human rights of the people of New Brunswick. The Government of New Brunswick cannot continue to operate as it has for the past 30 years through this discriminatory regulation – people's lives depend on accessible, timely, and adequate health care in their communities.

Your government knows this, New Brunswickers know this, and so does the Federal Government, who withheld federal health transfers earlier this year because of 84-20, only to reinstate them because of COVID-19.

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New Brunswick is facing a massive health crisis. There are 35,000 orphan patients waiting for family doctors, with 3,000 more added to the list with the closure of Clinic 554.

We call on your leadership to immediately eliminate Regulation 84-20, preventing funding for abortion care outside of hospital settings, and start investing in community care clinics. The people of New Brunswick deserve equitable access to health care.

Sincerely,



Jan Simpson
National President

Cc: National Executive Board
Regional Executive Committee

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