



March 25, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
pm@pm.gc.ca

Re: Financial Support for Health Charities affected by COVID-19

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing in support of the March 19, 2020 letter sent to you by the Health Charities Coalition of Canada (HCCC) about the need for the health charity sector to be supported as governments identify and deploy financial assistance packages to assist with the impacts of COVID-19.

While we appreciate the government has made some efforts to address specific needs for indigenous communities, as well as people affected by homelessness and gender-based violence, there is more still for government to do. In this time of crisis, the services of health charities are even more vital, the demands greater, and donor support to carry out day-to-day operations even more challenged. As a 100% donor-funded charity, ALS Canada is anticipating a drop in our revenues of 40 to 60 per cent.

The support services we are providing during the COVID-19 crisis are helping to keep people with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and their caregivers, safely in their homes, thereby reducing the burden on the strained healthcare system. We need the government to identify programs for health charities within the COVID-19 Economic Response Plan.

Aligned with the services and support we provide to deliver on our mission, here are some examples of the vital support ALS Canada and our provincial partners are offering during the COVID-19 pandemic to a vulnerable population and their caregivers of 3000 Canadians living with this progressive neurodegenerative disease, which results in progressive paralysis and eventually the loss of the ability to move, to speak and to breathe:

- We are providing psychological and emotional support, mobility equipment, and information gathering and dissemination. These services reduce the strain on the healthcare system or fill a gap where there is no longer any healthcare support for our community.
- Our Regional Managers are remotely connecting with every person living with ALS we serve, their families and caregivers to provide psychological and emotional support – listening to concerns, problem solving and identifying needs we can then work to address.
- Our support groups virtually bring together people affected by ALS, so they are not alone during this time of social isolation.

- The ALS Canada equipment program provides hospital beds, lift chairs, wheelchairs, bathroom equipment and lifts, enabling people to stay safely in their home, reducing risk of injury to people living with ALS and their caregivers and keeping them out of the healthcare system
- ALS Canada is convening and facilitating conference calls with the multi-disciplinary teams at ALS Clinics across Canada, so neurologists, respirologists and other healthcare practitioners can provide updates, share information, collectively problem-solve and identify emerging issues.

The Canadian health care system needs strong and resilient health charities to look out for people who face specific health issues and diseases, so they can be supported outside of the formal healthcare systems that are already beyond capacity in preparing for and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would be pleased to provide you with further insight into the issues and risks facing the community our organization is serving during the COVID-19 pandemic, to help government consider an appropriate response in support to the health charity sector.

Thank you for your tremendous leadership during this difficult time and for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Moore, CEO

Enclosure

Cc:

The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister

The Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, President of the Treasury Board

The Hon. Navdeep Singh Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

The Hon. William Sterling Blair, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

The Hon. Patricia Hajdu, Minister of Health

The Hon. Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages

The Hon. William Francis Morneau, Minister of Finance

The Hon. Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion



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Dear Prime Minister:

re: Financial Support for Health Charities impacted by COVID-19

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of the Health Charities Coalition of Canada (HCCC) to request that the health charity sector be supported as governments identify and deploy financial assistance packages to assist with the impacts of COVID-19.

The member health charities of HCCC represent Canadians with a wide range of medical conditions, each with different key issues. In addition to supporting patients, our members also bring together health providers to set standards of practices and invest in vital health research. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 we have been working with Canada's Public Health Agency as well as our scientific and medical directors to ensure that Canadians are receiving timely information regarding how to best protect themselves during this pandemic.

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has created an unprecedented challenge for Canada's health care system as well as the organizations that are actively supporting patients afflicted by cancer, ALS, Alzheimer's, diabetes and many other debilitating diseases and conditions. While the government's recently announced stimulus plan is an effective measure to support Canadians and employers, there is more support needed to protect the ability for health charities to continue to provide support for vulnerable patients during this pandemic.

The Canadian health care system needs strong and resilient health charities to look out for patients so that they are able to be supported outside of the formal healthcare system in order to prevent any increased strain on the healthcare system during this time of crisis.

As this pandemic continues to evolve, we are concerned about the potential for patients to be challenged in accessing non-invasive and invasive ventilation equipment as it is prioritized for COVID-19 patients and away from already vulnerable populations. This concern goes beyond equipment but also to health human resources, as well. As the capacity of the healthcare system becomes stressed, the already limited access to personal support workers and other in-home healthcare providers will become even more limited.



The challenges health charities and patients face are significant and daunting. As a result of efforts to bend the curve and impacts from the volatile economy, health charities are forecasting an immediate 30% reduction in revenues, directly impacting staffing levels and capacity to provide patient care and supports, including:

- **Support for caregivers and families:** virtual connections with individuals and groups, psychological support for people suffering with a disease and their caregivers in an effort to minimize caregiver fatigue as well as disease specific information and education;
- **Mobility and communication equipment:** providing health care equipment including hospital beds, wheelchairs, lifts and accessible bathroom supports that allow those living with diseases to do so safely at home. Charities rely on partnerships within the broader supply chain to support patients with their specific needs, including occupational therapists and medical device and equipment businesses that need to remain viable to support patients.
- **Health system support:** Health charities must have the capacity to continue to anticipate, identify and advocate for issues arising to ensure that vulnerable communities are not made further vulnerable in response efforts to COVID-19.
- **Research:** charities are actively involved and invested in research across a number of disease states, in partnership with other organizations, corporations and government. This will be significantly impacted as a result of revenue losses in the coming weeks and months.

We are requesting that we have an immediate discussion with the appropriate officials in your government about these challenges our members are facing and work together to identify solutions to protect our ability to provide care for vulnerable patients. I can be reached by email at ccote@healthcharities.ca or by phone at 613.914.4622 and am available to have this discussion at the earliest opportunity.

Thank you for your tremendous leadership during this difficult time and for considering our request.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Connie Côté".

Connie Côté

Chief Executive Officer, Health Charities Coalition of Canada

cc:

The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister

The Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, President of the Treasury Board

The Hon. Navdeep Singh Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

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