

Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care

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MAR 18 2014

HLTC2966MC-2013-3958

Mr. Gary Scripnick  
Chair  
Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association  
500 Algonquin Blvd. East  
Timmins ON P4N 1B7

Dear Mr. ~~Scripnick~~: Gary

Thank you for writing to me regarding your concerns about EMS funding, and ambulance and non-urgent services in rural and Northern Ontario. I appreciate you sharing your input on this important topic with me.

I also welcome the opportunity to respond to some of the proposals in NOSDA's April 2013 resolution:

NOSDA's submission states that, "*non-emergent and non-urgent inter-facility transfers are not completed by EMS services in high emergency call areas and use of ambulance for these calls is not supported by the Regulations.*" However, under the *Ambulance Act*, ambulance service must be provided to both non-urgent and urgent patients, where and when such service is needed and requested by dispatchers.

NOSDA's submission also states that, "*small northern hospitals have never been funded for non-emergent and non-urgent inter-facility transfers through their base budget or otherwise... (while) the vast majority of (such transfers) in Southern and Urban Ontario are funded 100% by the Province of Ontario through existing hospital operating budgets... the Province of Ontario has created a significant...inequity.*" I would note that current funding to hospitals, regardless of their location, does not specify an allocation for non-urgent passenger transportation. I understand that certain hospitals with access to non-ambulance service providers absorb the costs of these services through their global budgets. However, I also understand that this practice is variable and at the discretion of each hospital.

You resolve that the Government commit additional funding for non-urgent interfacility transfers. While the government is not proposing any additional funding for non-urgent transportation in rural and remote areas at this time, I encourage NOSDA to be in touch

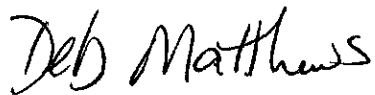
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Mr. Gary Scripnick

with the LHINs about other possible approaches. For example, in 2012, the government committed to a \$20M Transformation Fund for Small, Rural and Northern Hospitals, which resulted in some innovative approaches to the issue of non-urgent transportation. Last year, the government renewed its commitment to the \$20M Transformation Fund for three more years, building on the success of 2012-13. This funding should open new possibilities for these hospitals, their community partners and the LHINs to continue working closely to develop innovations that serve the needs of their communities.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deb Matthews  
Minister