



CAPA - Canadian Association of Physician Assistants
ACAM - Association canadienne des adjoints au médecin

July 21, 2011

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, P.C., M.P.
Health Canada
Brooke Claxton Building, Tunney's Pasture
Postal Locator: 0906C
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

Dear: Honourable Minister of Health, Leona Aglukkaq,
(Co: the Speaker House of Commons)

On behalf of our student members, the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants is proposing that the Minister of Finance's office include Physician Assistants in the 2011 Federal Budget's Loan Forgiveness program. The Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA) is a nationally incorporated bilingual professional association that advocates on behalf of its members at the direction of a volunteer Board of Directors which represents Physicians Assistants (PA), PA students, and other members across Canada and internationally. Physician Assistants are academically prepared as general medical practitioners with a strong focus in primary care medicine. CAPA has members in all national regions as well as the Canadian Forces sharing a desire to help develop Canadian healthcare and to advocate for the profession's model of cooperative, collaborative, patient centred quality care. PAs are currently working in Manitoba, New Brunswick, Alberta and Ontario in the civilian sector and all across the world through service in the Canadian Forces.

Recently, it was brought to CAPA's Board of Directors attention that the current Federal Budget (2011) (Chapter 4.2 page 130) contains a Loan Forgiveness program for doctors and nurses willing to work in under-served rural areas. This is an area in which we feel PAs can make an enormous difference in providing access to quality healthcare for all Canadians. There are currently 165 Physician Assistant students enrolled in the four education programs in Canada and who can make a significant impact in improving patient care. For over 40 years, Physician Assistants in the United States have demonstrated the ability to consistently improve access to health services in rural and under-served populations by being employed in these locations. In fact, providing service to these remote areas was one of the original driving forces behind the development of this profession in the United States. The Canadian Forces has been utilizing the skills of PAs in isolated locations, in operational theatres, and at sea for decades. This wealth of experience at home and abroad demonstrates that PAs can be an effective and cost-efficient method of expanding access to health care in communities and locations that need it most.

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CAPA respectfully asks that you consider the PA profession to be included in the Loan Forgiveness program to further encourage PAs to work in these rural, under-served areas, thereby increasing the accessibility to quality, patient centred healthcare.

For further information about the PA profession or for any other questions that you may have please feel free to contact myself or the national office (613-282-2272) and we will be happy to answer your questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian W Jones', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ian W Jones

National President, the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants

(204) 272-3096