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CANADIAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE SANTÉ PUBLIQUE

March 11, 2016

The Honourable Dr. Jane Philpott, PC, MP
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Philpott:

On behalf of the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), I want to thank you for meeting with us on January 28, 2016 to discuss sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs) in Canada. I appreciated your openness and candour in discussing a wide range of issues.

As you are aware, while the rates of new HIV infections and modelled incidence rates for hepatitis C (HCV) have decreased over the past decade, rates of infection for infections such as gonorrhoea, chlamydia and syphilis have increased at rates of 40.8%, 61.8% and an astounding 231.8%, respectively, over the same period of time.

For the past few years, the Public Health Agency of Canada (the Agency) has been reviewing its grants and contributions program for STBBIs and how it aligns with the Agency's strategic plan. In early 2013, PHAC announced its intention to move towards a more holistic approach on the prevention of to STBBIs.

Most front-line public health workers already work this way. STBBI integration has been a standard procedure for years given the common modes of transmission, risk behaviours, and social and structural risk factors (e.g., poverty, stigma and discrimination, untreated mental illness, and addictions) associated with all STBBIs. We welcome an integrated federal approach and urge your officials to develop and implement – in consultation with key stakeholders – a federal plan that is focused on priority actions that will result in reducing the incidence of all STBBIs in Canada.

We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with your staff and officials at the Agency to help achieve improved health and well-being for Canadians.

Sincerely,

Ian Culbert
Executive Director

cc. Ms. Caroline Pitfield, Director of Policy, Office of the Minister of Health
Ms. Krista Outhwaite, President, Public Health Agency of Canada
Dr. Gregory Taylor, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada
Ms. Bersabel Ephrem, Director General, Centre for Communicable Disease and Infection Control

www.cpha.ca

404-1525 Carling, Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 8R9
☎ 613.725.3769 | 📠 613.725.9826 | 📧 info@cpha.ca