

The federal government continues to rely on immigration as a key economic strategy for Canada. We have also committed to welcoming refugees as part of our global humanitarian role. Ensuring the successful integration of the diversity of newcomers to our province requires us to ensure the appropriate supports are in place within provincially funded services.

I am writing to you today on the topic of professional healthcare interpretation, as it remains a barrier to health equity within our province. Without the ability to communicate with a care provider in a preferred language, patients cannot engage with healthcare providers, including the legal requirement for informed consent to treatment. When a professional interpreter is not present, family members, friends and untrained staff are called upon as ad hoc interpreters. This can lead to medical errors, parentification of children and a lack of understanding of, and therefore adherence to, treatment plans.

I endorse the National Newcomer Navigation Network's call for action and support the principles of the position paper [Pan-Canadian Standards for Healthcare Equity: The Case for Provincial Interpretation Services](#). This position paper calls provincial governments to fund a centralized provincially funded interpretation as an essential foundation to healthcare delivery

Such a system is already in place in Manitoba and has been shown to improve provider satisfaction and access to interpreters, improve system efficiencies by reducing repeat or follow-up visits, increase patient safety, and provide a better and more equitable patient experience.

The Government of Canada has [announced](#) that it would provide over \$25 billion to provinces and territories to support shared health priorities through tailored bilateral agreements that are underpinned by key principles including "equal access for equity-seeking groups and individuals." I encourage you to access this funding to support a centralized interpretation in our province.

Yours sincerely,