

RE: Upcoming Healthcare Negotiations

Thank you for your correspondence about the privacy of individual health information in New Brunswick.

As you may be aware, other premiers and I recently concluded a round of negotiations with the federal government. Our goal was to secure additional funding to help overcome the challenges all provinces are facing with respect to our health-care systems.

You may also be aware that on Monday, Feb. 13, all premiers agreed to the proposal put forward by the federal government. This agreement will result in Ottawa providing New Brunswick an additional \$200 million per year in health-care funding over the next decade.

In a joint letter to the Prime Minister, signed by all premiers, we pledged the following: "While enhanced broader data sharing will now be explored and undertaken, to reflect capacities and needs in each of our jurisdictions, individual personal health information cannot and will not be exchanged."

It's important to note the following:

- The Government of New Brunswick does not share personal health data of New Brunswickers.
- The letter circulating online referencing concerns about digital health was actually written by a group *prior* to the Canada Health Transfer Meetings.
- There has been no such request for New Brunswickers' personal health information from the Federal Government, nor would we agree to it if they did request it.

The Government of New Brunswick may share already publicly available healthcare statistics, including the number of doctors and nurses in the province and surgical wait times if requested by the federal government.

As I've noted several times in recent months, federal health-care funding has dropped from 35 per cent of costs to about 22 per cent. That's why the recent negotiations with Ottawa were so important and we know there's still more progress that must be made.



Our government will continue to protect the personal health privacy rights of all New Brunswickers when signing a new Canada Health Transfer agreement.

Thank you again for sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,



Blaine M. Higgs

