



12 December, 2003

The Hon. Pierre Pettigrew
Minister of Health
Brooke Claxton Building – 16th Floor
Tunney's Pasture
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Ottawa, ON
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Dear Mr. Pettigrew:

Let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment as Minister of Health for the Government of Canada. This is an extremely important role, one to which Canadians look for leadership in terms of their most cherished social programme.

Attached please find a copy of a letter sent to your predecessor, the Honourable A. Anne McLellan. This letter is a follow-up to that initial communication.

The Canadian Psychological Association strongly supports the development of a more robust public health system in Canada. This would include more resources for public health systems in communities across the country as well as a coordinated, national programme to respond to outbreaks such as HIV/AIDS, SARS and West Nile Disease. An integral part of this new approach to public health should and must include the behavioural and social sciences. Human behaviour is at the heart of an effective public health system. Wellness as well as injury and illness prevention require significant behaviour change without which the public health programmes are much less effective.

Similarly, the behavioural and social sciences play a key role in the containment and eradication of epidemics. Human behaviour is central to effective surveillance systems, treatment and eradication programmes in addressing the human factors at the individual, family, practitioner and community levels involved in an epidemic such as SARS.

Attached you will find a letter and materials from Dr. Dixie Snider, Assistant Surgeon General and Acting Deputy Director for Public Health Science at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This information outlines the role, function and contributions of the behavioural and social sciences at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC is a highly respected organization that serves as an excellent model for other countries.

The Canadian Psychological Association strongly encourages you to follow the CDC example and to include the behavioural and social sciences as important and central players in the public health system of the future in Canada.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Dr. John Service at the CPA Head Office.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Patrick O'Neill, Ph.D.
President

Cc: Provincial Ministers of Health
Provincial Chief Medical Officers

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