



October 31, 2008

Honourable Michael Murphy  
Minister of Health  
Carleton Place  
P.O. Box 5100  
Fredericton, NB E3B 5G8

Dear Minister Murphy:

On behalf of the Saint John Board of Trade Board of Directors and members, I am writing today in response to the editorial "No duality in health" published in the Telegraph Journal on Friday, October 31, 2008. The editorial references the linguistic court action that has been launched against the provincial government. The potential implications of this court action may jeopardize the goals in reducing the number of health authorities, specifically the goals of increased efficiency and reduction of costs.

As Canada's only officially bilingual province, we should be promoting our fully bilingual health system, and not duality in the deliverance of services. Duality of services, especially in the health sector is fiscally unsustainable in a small province of 750,000 people. This is going to become critical within the next decade with an increasingly aging population and a shrinking workforce. To try to have a duality of medical professionals when it is difficult to locate one is going to put significant strain on health and provincial resources.

We strongly urge you to make every effort to ensure bilingualism and not duality occurs in the new health authorities. As New Brunswick moves towards the goal of self-sufficiency, a bilingual province will be better poised to become self-sufficient than a province that is divided along linguistic lines. This is extremely important as the Federal Minister of Finance, the Honourable Jim Flaherty, recently announced that equalization payment growth will slow to match the growth of the economy as a result of the recent economic downturn around the globe.

At this point, an increase in healthcare spending would be hazardous to the fiscal health of our Province, and an increase in taxes would not support the goals of self-sufficiency and population growth which the New Brunswick government has championed.

Sincerely,

*Imelda Gilman, for*  
Dr. Michael Barry  
Chair



CC: Premier of New Brunswick, Honourable Shawn Graham  
Editor, Telegraph Journal