Use your letterhead/logo/address

DATE

MP name and email address

Dear (insert name of MP),

**Re: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Income of Naturopathic Doctors in Canada**

I am one of 2,800 Naturopathic Doctors (NDs) in Canada and practice in your riding. I take the health and care of my patients very seriously and continue to do all that I can, based on public health recommendations and the guidance from my regulator (can be left out if not regulated), to support them during the pandemic. While NDs operate outside the publically funded health care system, our practices provide care to more than one million Canadians every year. I myself have (insert number of patients) who rely on me for their healthcare needs.

Ninety-five per cent of NDs in Canada are self-employed, operating a variety of practices that include small to medium clinics with several practitioners and employees, sole practitioner practices or working as a contractor in one or several clinics. As a health care professional I provide essentials services to my patients but, under the current circumstances, I am restricted from seeing patients in person except where the patient’s health and safety may be at risk(may substitute with except in urgent health situations). In order to continue patient care, I have turned to telemedicine. However, this has resulted in significant reductions in both patient consults and income.

For the most part, NDs fall outside the government relief measures announced to date. As we are self-employed, we do not qualify for Employment Insurance (EI). Only the few large clinics will qualify for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) because the current eligibility criteria overlooks contractors, sub-contractors and those who are compensated through dividend payments. Despite recent changes to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) that will allow some NDs who have some income from telecare to benefit, it is not enough to provide clinics and small businesses with the support they need.

I, and 85 per cent of NDs across the country have a duty of care to our patients and remain in practice to ensure our patients still have access to the care they need. However, I am struggling. In my practice, I am now working (xx) hours per week (or xx fewer hours a week) and have seen my income drop by (insert % or dollar amount).

Since March 15, more than 80 per cent of NDs who were working an average of 30 to 40 hours per week are now working between one and ten hours a week. Ninety-six per cent of them have seen their revenues drop by more than 30 per cent, with over 78 per cent experiencing a more than 60 per cent drop in income.

The Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program has the potential to provide meaningful assistance. It is critical that as details of the program are finalized, the program not rely exclusively on loans which will disincentivize participation of commercial landlords and leave relief out of their tenant’s reach. Further, the list of eligible businesses for the CECRA should include clinics forced to shut their doors to in-person consults but still required to pay rent.

I understand that the government is doing all it can to help Canadians who need it in this difficult time. As COVID-19 economic response measures continue to be evaluated, I urge you to ask the government to consider those, particularly health care professionals – like myself – whose needs are not met by existing support measures.

Should you or your staff require more information about my experience as a naturopathic doctor during these difficult times, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly.

Yours in health,

Insert signature and contact information if not previously stated