



Hon. Lena Metlege Diab
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

February 20, 2026

Dear Minister Diab,

We are writing to express our grave concerns regarding the changes to the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) announced by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada on January 27, 2026. Requiring IFHP beneficiaries to pay out-of-pocket \$4 for every eligible prescription and 30% of the cost of all eligible supplemental health products creates an extremely high barrier to accessing essential healthcare for some of the most marginalized families in Canada.

We are deeply concerned about the impact these changes will have on the children and families we see. Many IFHP beneficiaries have fled persecution, armed conflict, famine and worse. Many have been living in regions where healthcare systems have been destroyed, resulting in high rates of untreated conditions that require prescription medications, dental and vision care, and specialized therapies, including psychotherapy for profound trauma. To call these services “supplemental” is misleading – they are essential healthcare and the creation of a co-pay is an insurmountable barrier for those most in need.

A small but significant subset of these children and youth have chronic or complex healthcare needs (including conditions like asthma, autism, cerebral palsy, and diabetes). They depend on IFHP coverage for the specialized medical equipment, prescription medicines, and therapies they need for survival. The proposed changes will cost these families thousands of dollars – money which they do not have. As a result, lives may be lost. Creating barriers to preventative and community care will increase disease severity and erode quality of life. Sicker children and youth will present in our already overcrowded and strained hospitals and clinics. Delayed or denied care will result in previously manageable conditions becoming emergency situations that will ultimately increase costs on our healthcare systems.

We care for all children and youth in Canada. Everyone, no matter who they are, has the same right to life. As health care providers in Canada, we have a duty to uphold the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. The introduction of these changes defies Article 24 of Convention that recognizes “the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health”.

The introduction of co-payments under the IFHP will lead to increased healthcare costs and a real risk of irreversible harm to children, youth and families. As such, we implore the government to reverse these changes and strengthen Canada’s commitment to ensuring universal healthcare for all.

Sincerely,

Dr. Laura Sauvé
President, CPS

Dr. Charles Hui
Chair, Caring for Kids New to Canada Task Force

Dr. Shazeen Suleman
Co-Chair, CPS Newcomer Child Health Special Interest Group

Dr. Esther Lee
President, CPS Complex Care Section

Dr. Sara Jassemi
President, CPS Social Paediatrics Section

Dr. Karen Leis
President, CPS Global Health Section

CC. Hon. Marjorie Michel, Minister of Health