



Via e-mail: [jflaherty@fin.gc.ca](mailto:jflaherty@fin.gc.ca)

December 16, 2010

The Honourable James M. Flaherty, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Finance  
Finance Canada  
140 O'Connor Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G5

Dear Finance Minister:

As you prepare to meet with your federal, provincial and territorial colleagues on December 20th in Kananaskis, Alberta, we wish to highlight the immediate and growing need to improve income security, especially for today's aging Canadians.

A key driver of costs for those living on fixed incomes is uninsured health-care services. Not only do vulnerable seniors have to deal with limited access to long-term care spaces and overcrowding of emergency rooms and hospitals, they often must bear the cost burden of:

- prescription drugs;
- medical devices; and
- home care services.

Health-care services most needed by seniors are often better delivered in our communities and homes rather than in hospitals. Although treating acute illnesses will always be a priority of the health system, primary and community-based care that is more flexible and preventive is often more appropriate – and is certainly less expensive.

Courageous provincial and federal decision-makers have the opportunity now to improve the responsiveness of such care by integrating pharmacare and home-care coverage into Canada's new health accord. Bringing these critical components within the basket of insured services under medicare would ensure that all Canadians can receive the care and support they need in their homes and communities while saving the system much-needed dollars.

As you and your colleagues work to improve pensions in Canada, we hope you will also consider the links between the real health-care burdens faced by today's seniors and real income security – and to look at health care in new and different ways.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R Bard", is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Rachel Bard , RN, M.A.Ed  
Chief Executive Officer