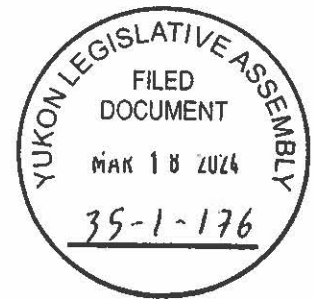


Yukon Dental Association
PO BOX 30083
Whitehorse, YT
Y1A 5M2



March 14th, 2024

The Honourable Tracy-Anne McPhee
Minister of Health and Social Services
Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6

Dear Minister McPhee,

On behalf of the dental community in the Yukon, and our patients, I would like to thank you and Yukon Health for the outstanding efforts in bringing accessible dental care to fellow Yukoners through the Yukon Dental Program (YDP). Since its launch in 2022, it has proven to be a massive success with our member dentists, our dental staff members, and most importantly, our patients.

Despite its success, the YDP is now at risk of being displaced by the federal government's Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP). We feel that a federally administered dental program like CDCP would not be able to meet the unique challenges of providing dental care in the north and would be a step backward for eligible Yukoners if it were to replace the YDP.

With the same target demographics and objectives as the CDCP, the YDP is proving to be a far superior program in delivering accessible care to Canadians, for the below reasons:

- 1) **There is no additional administrative burden.** The YDP integrates seamlessly with existing insurances and claims processing and there is no need for verification of codes. In contrast, the CDCP in its current form is cumbersome for patients to gain access and for dental staff to administer. With staff shortages most acutely felt in rural and remote communities like the Yukon, administrative burden is something all Yukon dentists are very concerned about, and rightfully so.
- 2) **The YDP is a true universal coverage program.** Unlike the CDCP, where eligible patients may still be responsible for a percentage of the fees as co-pay, under the YDP all eligible patients pay zero dollars out of pocket, which allows for equitable access of care for patients across all eligible income brackets, and subsequently greater uptake/participation by dental clinics.

- 3) **CDCP requires mandatory provider registration, which denies a patient's right to choose.** Under the current framework, eligible CDCP patients can only be treated by a dentist participating in CDCP. Should a dentist not subscribe to the CDCP, unless the federal government allows patients the option to be reimbursed directly by the CDCP, it may mean the severing of the dentist-patient relationship. A patient should not be forced to choose providers based on their coverage. In contrast, the YDP has no mandatory provider registration requirement. All Yukon dentists are already participating in the YDP, and we have worked extensively with our territorial government partners for the last two years to promote this program to Yukoners. To introduce uncertainty at this stage, when a vast majority of Yukoners are already familiar with the YDP and already have accessible dental care, would be antithesis to the mandate of a public health program.

Federal Health Minister Mark Holland visited Whitehorse on March 11th, 2024, and met with representatives of the Yukon Dental Association (YDA) to discuss the CDCP. During this meeting, it was mentioned that the federal government was open to the idea of each province or territory administering their own dental care, provided that the program was at least equivalent to or better than the scope and coverage of the CDCP. The YDA would like to unequivocally state that, in our professional opinion, the YDP provides far superior coverage and access to dental care to Yukoners, and **we respectfully ask that Yukon Government fight to keep YDP as the dental program for Yukoners, and use the funds earmarked for the CDCP to fund and increase the coverage of the YDP.**

We understand that the negotiations are currently underway between Health Canada and Yukon Health as to how the CDCP and YDP will interact, and we hope that our opinion would be considered. The YDP is truly a universal dental care that has already and demonstrably changed the lives and smiles of many people living in the Yukon Territory, and we hope it can continue to do so for years to come.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kenny Liu
President, Yukon Dental Association

c.c. Currie Dixon
Leader of the Yukon Party
MLA Copperbelt North

c.c. Kate White
Leader of the Yukon NDP
MLA Takhini-Kopper King