

The Honourable Kevin Sorenson,
Chair, House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A4

Dear Mr. Sorenson,

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Government of Canada, to the Forty-fifth Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled *Report 4, Oral Health Programs for First Nations and Inuit – Health Canada, of the Fall 2017 reports of the Auditor General of Canada*.

The Government is committed to responding to each of the commitments outlined in the Committee Report. The Government is responding to two of these recommendations now and will provide responses on the remaining recommendations by the due dates set forth by the Committee in its report. The two recommendations addressed through this response are:

- Recommendation 4 - Indigenous Services Canada should provide the Committee with a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to improving the process for making changes to its list of oral health services covered by the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program.
- Recommendation 5 - Indigenous Services Canada should provide the Committee - pertaining to improving the management of the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program dental benefit – a report detailing what progress has been made with regard to 1) clarifying what its service standard for pre-approvals is measuring; 2) clarifying the service standard for complex appeals; and, 3) improving its data entry, so that it has accurate and reliable information in its appeal database.

With respect to recommendation 4, in order to ensure that the Department's *Policy Review and Development Process for Non-Insured Health Benefits Dental Benefits* documented the necessary level of detail, an internal review was undertaken. As a result of the review, the internal *Policy Review and Development Process for Non-Insured Health Benefits Dental Benefits* document was revised to include more detail on decision-making in the existing process map. The revisions were approved by the Director General of the Non-Insured Health Benefits Directorate in July 2017.

Additionally, the Program developed a communications process map that details how the Program communicates with clients and providers. This was approved by the Director General of the Non-Insured Health Benefits Directorate in April 2018. This process map will help to ensure that clients and providers are informed of changes in a timely manner.

In response to recommendation 5, Non-Insured Health Benefits developed a revised service standard for dental predetermination requests. The revised service standard, approved by the Director General of Non-Insured Health Benefits in February 2018, includes a description of what is involved in the predetermination review process, as well as how the service standard is measured. The Department has also revised the appeals section of the Indigenous Services Canada website, which now includes clearly stated service standards for appeals. By stating service standards and what these standards include, providers and clients will have clarity on when a response from the Program can be expected.

Furthermore, in order to address part 3 of the recommendation, Non-Insured Health Benefits developed a Quality Assurance process map regarding data entry in the appeals database which was approved by the Director General of the Non-Insured Health Benefits Directorate in April 2018.

Together, these changes are supporting improvements to program administration and data for the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program dental benefits.

The remaining recommendations (recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 6) have varying deadlines, as established in the Committee Report, and a Minister-approved response will be provided to the Committee by the established due dates.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that the Government is committed to a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples. The Government thanks the Committee for their interest and recommendations. I trust that this response demonstrates Indigenous Services Canada's commitment to address the Committee's recommendations.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Jane Philpott M.D., P.C., M.P.

Encl.

c.c. Angela Crandall, Clerk of the Committee