

**Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care**

Office of the Minister

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**Ministère de la Santé  
et des Soins de longue durée**

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OCMS HLTC2972IT-2013-221

Dr. Doris Grinspun  
President and CEO  
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario  
158 Pearl St  
Toronto, ON M5H 1L3

Dear Dr. Grinspun, *Doris*

I am writing to share some welcome news with our valued partners.

Starting on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, the Ontario government is implementing the Ontario Temporary Health Program (OTHP) for refugee claimants to ensure that everyone living in this province has equal access to quality health care.

OTHP will provide short-term, primary and acute care as well as medication coverage to select refugee claimant groups no longer covered by the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) or other government programs. OTHP will enable refugee claimants to access care at the right time and in the right place and in many cases, before they face a more serious health issue. The program will be administered by Medavie Blue Cross on behalf of the Ontario Government.

I am aware that for the past 18 months, a dedicated group of physicians, nurses and other health providers have advocated on behalf of this vulnerable population and took on the responsibility of providing them with essential health care. I want to express to them my heartfelt thanks. They truly represent the best of compassionate care that our health care professionals provide every day and they make me very proud.

I am pleased that with this interim program, we are addressing a gap and ensuring that people who need urgent medical care have access to it. I will continue to urge the federal government to reverse their decision. Until they do, an annual invoice for refugee claimant health coverage will be sent to them.

Thank you again for your patience and support while my ministry developed this program. I look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the health of all people living in Ontario.

Sincerely,

*Deb Matthews*

Deb Matthews  
Minister

c: Michael Coteau, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration

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bc: Vasanthi Srinivasan, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health System Strategy & Policy Division  
Marsha Barnes, Assistant Deputy Minister, Citizenship and Immigration Division