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I am directing this letter to you because I believe it deserves your attention!

I have been infected with the HIV virus, going on 11 years. Many aspects of my life have been affected more or less, over these years. What has happened over these years has been relatively good health for the most part. There have been some health issues, changes in the level of energy and what I can and cannot do! Several years ago I stopped working and became one of the many people living with HIV and AIDS to go onto social assistance, and then onto CPP Disability.

My CPP Disability Pension is \$703 a month. The maximum amount for those receiving Gain for Handicapped is \$814. I receive a top-up from Gain for Handicapped of \$111, bringing my income up to \$814.

Rent is \$660 a month, plus Hydro and phone. This leaves less than \$100 to live on a month. I am on waiting lists for subsidized housing of which there are very few! The ones there are, cost the government far more to build and maintain than if they were to subsidize me where I presently live. There are even fewer portable subsidies which is what I am hopeful to have one day, and makes more sense than myself and the government paying more than is necessary for housing. Rent taking up most of my income allows very little money left for food. This means that nutritionally I no longer have those needs met that did contribute to my good health, when I was working and had a good income.

I find myself in a situation where I am unable to provide enough for a healthy diet. When I was working I was able to maintain a standard of health which meant I was not using much health care services. Now in this period with limited resources and a standard of life 50% below acceptable standards, I find myself in Poor health and a greater need of ongoing health care!

There are many people in my life that provide! There is the PWA (People With AIDS) food bank Parc Grocery, here in Vancouver, which provides limited groceries, but the means for those things available to me there. Loving friends help out, but when there are no funds, there is no access to any!

It was this situation that took me to explore just what was available to me. Upon exploration, I found that there were people who were receiving both Gain for Handicapped and CPP (Canada Pension Plan). This is something that most who are collecting both, keep from the government, but there are those that came forward and

claimed they were doing this. This was, for those pioneers, the beginning of years of appeals and tribunals. During this time these individuals were receiving both benefits.

I do not believe that only some should receive and not others, nor did I believe that this was viable for the government to give both benefits to all people on Disabilities, HIV or not! But what was going on, were people trying to live and maintain their health and a quality of life whilst it was slipping away from them.

Not having enough money to live on, prompted me to look into this situation. Find a way if there was one, to improve my financial situation. It came to my attention through Social Services and AIDS Vancouver, that whilst in the appeal process a person was entitled to receive both benefits. Some were coming up to their Tribunals and were being denied, but others received in the process. Although in reality it would only be a matter of time before all would be denied, this had been going on for years, and may continue awhile longer. I decided there was no other means, deciding to go through the process and appeal that my CPP not be considered income. Just one cheque would allow me to have money in the bank for those times when I couldn't otherwise have bought a pound of butter or something I needed to sustain me.

It was in that need that I appealed the process. At that time the government was in the process of re-working social programs, cutbacks, and seriously looking at the CPP program and its problems. My application was not submitted until December 1995. As of January 1996, amendments were made and put into place, denying me the appeal process. This was a process that others had been allowed, and because I had the time and energy and for those that couldn't, I decided to carry it further.

I wrote to government, and with help from the Advocacy Office and PWA and their lawyers, appealed again! This time receiving a letter denying the right to take my own case and situation to tribunal, and consider the issue final at these levels of government. I was the first to receive such notice, and once again decided to pursue this.

There is a need to find ways for those in my situation, living with HIV and AIDS, unable to receive proper nutrition and housing due to finances. Those cases ahead of me as well as my own, prompted PWA organization and collaboration coming up with Schedule F Requests for additional monthly income assistance to meet ongoing medical needs. The need even greater now having those who were denied receiving both benefits, limited to live on \$814 a month.

As well, the government will soon have in place a tag system. This system, bringing Federal and Provincial governments on line, enabling for the first time cross referencing, who is collecting on what services! Once this occurs and those found out to be collecting both are stopped, there will be even more cases of individuals losing their homes and ability to meet nutritional and health needs!

Schedule F requests are not the answer, but the need is so great to find funds for those living below poverty standards, it is the present course of action!

There were no amendments made in the last budget for those living on disabilities, and thus I am writing to convey the need, my own and others, to ensure what is regarded as a right to a **Quality of Life!**

My financial situation dictates to me what I can afford to eat and the nutritional quality. The stress that others are going through trying to maintain a home, food, and health is putting them at risk of continued health problems as well. This all means that, in turn, myself and others are in greater need of medical attention! Once again, taxing an already taxed health care system.

Would it not indeed be better to provide benefits that would allow for proper nutrition and continued health, avoiding this present situation, which undermines a person's health and the health care system? What about more subsidized housing, or better yet, more portable subsidies, which in turn cost the government less!

There are those dying, due to the stress on an already stressed and suppressed immune system. Added stress due to a lack of funds available to support nutritional diet and good health. Those living with HIV who are in constant need of medical attention due to a poor quality of food and water. (Tap water not fit to drink by those with a suppressed immune system, susceptible to micro organisms like micro sporidia). The need, and added expense, of purchasing bottled water to drink and cook with, the lack of which, contributes to their disease!

These are issues that I have been faced with recently, and those that many have faced, and fought to bring about change. It is my wish that by voicing these concerns, that those who are not aware be made aware, and bring about change!

Included with this letter is documentation of the process I explored. The Schedule F forms and information, with mine as an example of what for most, seems a last resort available in the need for sufficient funding!

As mentioned above, my life has been affected in many ways over these years, and I have included documentation to enable you knowledge and understanding of this. This is a process you will see, I have put into place before, and I trust, it will create awareness, education and a shift in perception!

Science suggests that HIV infection alone may not lead to AIDS, but that it is the co-factors that can cause immune suppression.

**People with AIDS need:**

**Funds** - are necessary to provide for those individuals living with AIDS and other disabilities, a quality of life which does not undermine their health.

**Proper Nutrition** - HIV infected individuals who eat well feel better compared to those that consume a less than adequate diet. Malnutrition can compromise their ability to fight off infection. Make good nutrition high priority in AIDS treatment!

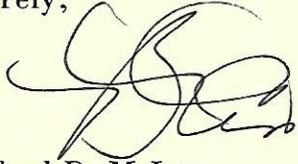
**Water** - clear of micro organisms, which means purchased bottled water needed.

**Affordable Housing** - providing a comfortable and stress free environment in which to live.

**Health Care** - would have a payback in reduced and delayed use with these provisions in place as suggested by studies confirming lower survival associated with lower income.

This letter is intended to initiate a call to action! These are vital necessities for people living with AIDS throughout Canada!

Sincerely,



Bradford D. McIntyre

copy to:

Prime Minister Jean Chretien  
Reform Leader Preston Manning  
Bloc Quebecois Leader Michelle Gauthier  
Premier of B.C. Glen Clark  
B.C. Liberal MP Gordon Campbell  
Ontario Minister of Health Jim Wilson  
Svend Robinson, MP  
B.C. Minister of Social Services Joy K. MacPhail  
Minister of Human Resources Development Canada Doug Young  
Minister Municipal Affairs and Housing Lois Boone  
Minister of Human Resource Development Douglas Young  
Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Status of Woman Hedy Fry  
Area Manager, Ministry of Social Services Susan Broadfoot

Conservative Leader John Charest  
NDP Leader Alexa McDonough  
Premier of Quebec Lucien Bouchard  
Premier of Ontario Mike Harris  
B.C. Reform MP Jack Weisgerber  
B.C. Minister of Health Penny Priddy  
Emery Barnes, MLA

John Cruickshank: Vancouver Sun  
James Travers: Ottawa Citizen  
William Thorsell: Globe & Mail  
Eric Mally: W5  
Dini Petty: The Dini Petty Show  
Max Keeping: CJOH Ottawa  
Eleanor Brown: Xtra (Toronto)  
Siegfried Bursche: Alive  
Jim Pearce: BCPWA News

Michael Cooke: The Province  
Lou Clancy: Toronto Star  
Keith Bradbury: BCTV  
Peter Mansbridge: The National  
Nancy Cooper: CBC Ottawa  
Frederick Lee: Xtra West  
Robert Thompson: ICON  
Evan Jones: BCPWA Advocacy  
Richard Banner: Angles

Adrienne Clarkson: Adrienne Clarkson Presents  
Cal Johnstone: Global Television Network  
Lawrence Buser: Common Ground Publishing Corp.  
Jackie Haywood: BC Persons with AIDS Society  
Ted Townsend: West Ender/Kitsilano News