



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

Warden Danny Muise
Municipality of the District of Argyle
P.O. Box 10
Tusket, Nova Scotia
B0W 3M0

Sent via email: admin@munargyle.com

June 4, 2021

Warden Muise,

I want to thank you for copying me in your May 27, 2021 letter to the federal Minister of Health, the Honourable Patty Hajdu.

For Nova Scotians, healthcare is among their top concerns. This includes access to addictions and mental health services. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed even more the need for better access to these services.

Over the past year, my Caucus has presented three comprehensive healthcare plans for Nova Scotians: *Hope for Health*, *Dignity for Seniors* and *Universal Mental Health Care*. In the latter plan, we have presented initiatives to improve access to addictions and mental health care for Nova Scotians including:

- a separate provincial department dedicated to mental health and addictions;
- opening billing codes to allow private practitioners to deliver their service to everyone;
- attracting new mental health professionals to Nova Scotia;
- increased training options for health professionals and educators;
- a 24/7 mental-telehealth service; and
- a 9-8-8 mental health crisis line, separate from 9-1-1.

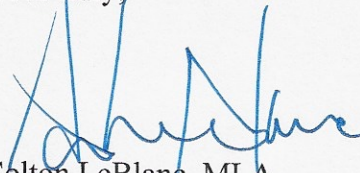
There must be more accessible, modern options. As outlined in this plan, we will create a 24/7 mental telehealth service to conduct proper triage, intake, and funnel patients to the proper channels, and a 24/7, 9-8-8 crisis line. It is important to recognize that no one can remember a ten-digit number in a state of crisis, and that crises don't only happen Monday to Friday from 8:30 to 4:30.

Mental health care is health care. Access to mental health care is a right, not a privilege. As a province, we must mobilize our collective resources now. For the government to provide mental health care, it must be:

- **Free of Stigma** for those who need it;
- **Accountable** to those who rely on it; and
- **Universally Accessible** for those who cannot afford it.

I want to thank you and Council for its support of the implementation of a 9-8-8 crisis hotline.

Your truly,



Colton LeBlanc, MLA
Argyle-Barrington

cc: MP Chris d'Entremont, West Nova