



Kristyn Wong-Tam

MPP TORONTO CENTRE

November 29, 2022

Minister Sylvia Jones, MPP
Minister of Health
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Urgent Alternative Funding Plan Needed To Save Connect-Clinic And Gender Affirming Virtual Health Care in Ontario

Dear Minister Jones,

I am writing to you in a desperate plea for help. In two days, Trans, Non-Binary, and gender diverse people across Ontario are at risk of losing a vital, gender affirming health care service.

Connect-Clinic is a virtual-only clinic that provides crucial, often life-saving care, such as hormone therapy and gender affirming surgery referrals, to Trans and gender-diverse people across Ontario. For many of the clinic's 1,500 patients, Connect-Clinic care is the only gender affirming care they can access.

Connect-Clinic fills a crucial gap in Ontario's health care system. According to clinic founder and lead physician Dr. Kate Greenaway, the clinic receives between 150 and 200 referrals each month for patients who lack options for gender affirming care in their local communities. According to Dr. Greenway, there is no capacity within the Community Health Clinic and Family Health Team system to take on this volume of referrals.

But the care of these 1,500 patients and the 2,000 more on the Connect-Clinic waitlist is in jeopardy due to the new physician services agreement that will come into effect on December 1. The agreement will make it impossible for Connect-Clinic to take on new patients, and will make operating the clinic's services for existing patients extremely difficult. The new fee structure will see physicians receiving just \$20 per video appointment and \$15 per phone call with a patient, down from the previous fee of \$67 or more. The new fees will apply not just to new patients — but existing ones.

Minister, access to gender affirming health care in Ontario has always been inconsistent and limited. The pandemic made gender affirming health care even harder to access, as the strain on our health care system has led to even longer wait

times and has squeezed health care workers beyond their capacity to support Ontarians.

We cannot lose another health care service for this vulnerable population; the lives of Trans, Non-Binary and gender diverse people are literally on the line.

In your capacity as the Minister of Health and mine as the Official Opposition Critic for 2SLGBTQI Issues, I propose that we work together to avert the loss of Connect-Clinic and the essential, specialised health care it provides. **The time for action is now. I implore you to extend an alternative funding plan to save the gender affirming health services offered at Connect-Clinic.**

I await your reply and trust that you will turn your attention to this urgent matter as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Wong-Tam', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kristyn Wong-Tam
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