



AFMC

The Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada
L'Association des facultés de médecine du Canada

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

The Honourable Tony Clement, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Industry
Industry Canada
C.D. Howe Building
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

Dear Minister:

On behalf of the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, I am writing to express our collective concern regarding the Government's recent decision to eliminate the mandatory Canada Census Long Form and move towards a voluntary form. We have been closely monitoring the debate surrounding this issue and are still unable to reconcile the foundation for this decision, particularly in light of the implications this will have on the quality and usability of Census data.

Canada's faculties of medicine have a tripartite mission: (a) to train the physician workforce of tomorrow, (b) conduct world-class research, and (c) provide the best possible clinical care to Canadians. Each of these three missions is intrinsically linked to our ability to access data and information pertaining to the Canadian population. As you are well aware, Statistics Canada has produced data that is recognized internationally for its quality, and that has served us, and countless other agencies, particularly well. This decision will seriously compromise its ability to continue to do so.

As has been articulated by many other stakeholder groups across the political spectrum, the move away from a mandatory long form will seriously compromise the quality of the data available to those developing programs, providing services, and conducting population research in this country. And while many Canadians may well opt to fill out the voluntary form, we are convinced that there will be a serious underrepresentation of many groups – often the groups most in need of consideration when developing programs and targeted initiatives.

We urge the Government to reconsider this decision and remain at your disposal should you wish to discuss this further with representatives from our faculties who rely on this data in order to train physicians, conduct research, and provide care in this country.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Nick Busing
President & CEO
The Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada