

Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care

Office of the Minister

10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hepburn Block  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto ON M7A 2C4  
Tel 416-327-4300  
Fax 416-326-1571  
www.health.gov.on.ca

Ministère de la Santé  
et des Soins de longue durée

Bureau du ministre

10<sup>e</sup> étage, édifice Hepburn  
80, rue Grosvenor  
Toronto ON M7A 2C4  
Tél 416-327-4300  
Télééc 416-326-1571  
www.health.gov.on.ca



MAR 09 2010

HLTC2966MC-2009-13149

Ms. Marianne Ford  
MarianneFord.com

Dear Ms. Ford:

Sylvia Jones, MPP for Dufferin-Caledon, has forwarded to me your e-mail regarding a new discovery for the treatment of Multiple Sclerosis.

I understand your deep concern for your son and I appreciate how difficult a disease Multiple Sclerosis can be.

OHIP provides payments for certain medically necessary physician services which are listed in the Schedule of Benefits for Physician Services, certain dental services that are required to be performed in a hospital, and certain therapeutically necessary services provided by prescribed practitioners and certain prescribed health facilities.

This new "liberation treatment" would be considered experimental at this point in time and would not be covered under OHIP. The *Health Insurance Act* does not permit OHIP payment for non-insured services and in addition, there is no provision under the legislation enabling the ministry to exercise discretion and extend coverage to services that are not prescribed by regulation.

There is a process by which new services or changes to existing services may be proposed. Physicians seeking to add new services to the Schedule may develop a formal proposal with their specialist section of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) for submissions to the Medical Services Payment Committee.

Similarly, the ministry conducts its own reviews of new services, or considers application of existing services to new conditions based on current scientific evidence and medical practice. Through this process, the ministry is assured that new services are generally recognized by appropriate specialists as being medically necessary and that appropriate definitions, conditions, clinical eligibility criteria and fees are determined.

...2

Ms. Marianne Ford

I can appreciate your frustration in wanting to see new treatments available to your son as soon as possible. However, this process for considering treatments for coverage by OHIP is needed to ensure that Ontario spends its limited resources on treatments that are proven to be effective and meet medical standards of care.

With respect to research, I want to assure you that the ministry is committed to ensuring that Ontario's health care system is supported by the best research. Key research is under way in Ontario, such as the McMaster study to see if CCSVI (chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency) is the cause of MS. Currently, patients are volunteering for this McMaster study to receive treatment as follow up to the Italian study by Dr. Zamboni. However, the ministry's Research Program does not fund clinical and biomedical research as its mandate focuses on health services research to inform our policy decision making. Two main sources of research funding for clinical research are the Ministry of Research and Innovation - <http://www.mri.gov.on.ca/english/about/default.asp> and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) - <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/779.html> the major federal agency responsible for funding health research in Canada. I have forwarded a copy of your letter to the Honourable John Milloy, Minister, Ministry of Research and Innovation, for his information.

You may also be interested to know that the Canadian MS Society is inviting proposals from researchers in Canada to apply for research grants for further research into this new 'liberation' technique.

I wish you, your son and his family well. Thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,



Deb Matthews  
Minister

c: Sylvia Jones, MPP  
Hon. John Milloy, Minister