

February 24, 2021

**Main office - Winnipeg**

1111 Munroe Avenue  
Suite 207  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R2K 3Z5

Dear Mr. Daniel Blaikie,

We are writing this letter, as a group of Red River College Nursing students in a second year, Health Promotion of the Older Adult Clinical Community rotation. A learning outcome for this rotation is to assess the communities of Elmwood and Chalmers area to determine the strengths and resources for the older adults. We talk with volunteers over the phone, develop teaching plans, and gain insight to how a nurse in the community might intervene to promote health and wellness.

One area that came to our attention is that access to affordable internet is key to maintaining connection and health during this pandemic circumstance. Our group sees that there are excellent initiatives occurring in the Elmwood Chalmers area to address needs such as access to groceries, housing and neighborhood beautification. The issue that we are writing to you about is affordable access to internet and broadband services for the older adult, students, and people of lower income.

The federal government has a great strategy for “High speed access for all: Canada’s connectivity strategy” which is making great strides to make internet access a reality across our country. The area we would like to focus on is the consideration of affordability as an objective in connectivity programs. The “Connecting families” and “Computers for Success Canada” program is an excellent tool to bring together public, private and non-profit sectors to ensure more Canadians have access to the internet. However this is geared towards families and the program is only approved until March 2022.

We are calling for action to expand on this federal program to assist the older adult and student population to access a low cost home internet service. This would enhance these population’s abilities to learn, work, socialize, and access government services. While this was an obstacle before the pandemic, public health restrictions have intensified this need as more and more services become virtual.

As the Canadian government strives to bridge Canada’s digital divide, we implore policy and decision makers to consider all age categories and the lower spectrum of income so that it remains affordable and thus accessible to all.

We thank you for your consideration with this matter,  
Sincerely,

Niloufar Bagherzamani SNRRC  
Andrea Jungwirth SNRRC  
Nicole Martens SNRRC  
Kezia Balzer SNRRC

Leanne Chlopecki SNRRC  
Leah Posaluko-Rich SNRRC  
Shayna Vogel SNRRC  
Tracey McCulloch RBNB