

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Dear Minister Squires,

As a concerned Manitoban, I want to express my unease over current access to Mifegymiso, the abortion pills, in this province. As I am sure you are aware, Mifegymiso is currently only available free of charge at the existing three sites where surgical abortion care has been available (Brandon Regional Health Centre, Women's Hospital [HSC] and Women's Health Clinic in Winnipeg). Otherwise it is only covered for those who have reached their pharmacare deductible, for those who are receiving Employment and Income Assistance, for those with refugee status under the Interim Federal Health Program and for those who are covered under Non-Insured Health Benefits. This discrepancy places women and families living in rural and remote communities at an unparalleled disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts.

I am writing to you today to ask that the provincial government provide universal coverage for Mifegymiso for all Manitobans. As a resident of this province, I would like Manitoba to stand with the other eight provinces that provide universal coverage to Mifegymiso.

Since the approval of Mifegymiso in 2015, Canadian women were finally given an alternative to surgical abortions. However, with surgical and now medical abortions only being offered only in Winnipeg and Brandon, patients have to make the expensive trek into these cities, wasting valuable work and family time and incurring expenses for travel, accommodation and child care. Currently, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are the only provinces that are not providing universal coverage of Mifegymiso. Universal coverage helps women make health care decisions with their physician based on what is best for them and their health. Currently, in Manitoba some women have to make decisions dictated by finances and not what is best for them and their health. Unequal access to Mifegymiso is creating inequitable barriers for rural and remote women, a group that already experiences decreased access to reproductive health services.

Economically, Mifegymiso has been shown to reduce health care costs. In a cost-minimization analysis summarized by the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH), they found that Mifegymiso costs 916\$ less than surgical abortions performed in a hospital.^[i] This analysis did not consider the costs of commuting to areas where surgical abortions are covered, a fee that is covered by the province. CADTH concluded their study by recommending that Mifegymiso be free of charge for termination of pregnancy.

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2,013 abortions were performed in Manitoba in 2016. ^[ii] Extending universal coverage outside Winnipeg and Brandon can represent significant savings to the government of Manitoba.

I recognize and appreciate this government's commitment to women's healthcare. I acknowledge the efforts already put forward to improve Mifegymiso access, including adding it to the Manitoba and Drugs Benefit Interchangeability Formulary and First Nations and Inuit Health Branch. However, I believe that providing universal coverage for Mifegymiso is an essential part of reproductive health, contraception, and women's health.

For all of the aforementioned, my request today is simple:

I am asking the Government of Manitoba to commit to a plan to provide universal coverage for Mifegymiso to all persons living in Manitoba.

Sincerely,

(Signature, can be typed)

[i] https://www.cadth.ca/sites/default/files/cdr/pharmacoeconomic/SR0502_Mifegymiso_PE_Report.pdf

[ii] <https://www.cihi.ca/sites/default/files/document/induced-abortion-2017-en-web.xlsx>

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