



CANADIAN  
PHARMACISTS  
ASSOCIATION

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DU CANADA

Hon. Tony Clement, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Industry  
C.D. Howe Building  
235 Queen Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H5

July 23, 2010

Dear Minister,

I am writing to add the voice of the Canadian Pharmacists Association to those who have called upon you to reverse your decision to replace the mandatory census long form with a voluntary form. As many governments, academics, individuals and business, labour, health, and social organizations have already pointed out, scrapping the mandatory long form will represent a significant step backward in collecting information vital to planning better social and health programs for all Canadians.

For pharmacists, and the health care field more generally, information gathered by the mandatory long form is essential to plan and target programs from the perspective of population health and social service delivery. As stated by the Canadian Medical Association Journal, "Health researchers link clinical information to population data obtained from the long-form census to determine how socio-economic status affects health. This is done by comparing the rates of disease or other health indicators across various postal codes. Knowing the employment status and average income of people in these postal codes is vital to this type of research." For pharmacists, this wealth of information is vital from both a health and a business planning perspective.

Statisticians and other experts in the data collection field have already stated their views regarding the corruption of data that a voluntary form will cause over a mandatory form. We would urge you to heed the advice of the statistical experts, including the two former heads of Statistics Canada, and immediately rescind the decision to revert to a voluntary long form.

Thank you for taking the time to review our comments. We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Jeff Poston, PhD, MRPharmS.  
Executive Director