

November 2, 2023

The Honourable Anita Anand, P.C. M.P
President of the Treasury Board
90 Elgin Street, 8th Floor
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0R5

Dear Minister Anita Anand,

Re: PAFSO and PIPSC concerns over implementation of PSHCP abroad by MSH International

On 1 November, the nineteen Bargaining Agents of the National Joint Council, including the Professional Institute of the Public Service Canada (PIPSC) and the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO), wrote you to express our deep and serious concerns about the transition of the Federal government's Public Service Health Care Plan to Canada Life Assurance Company. As the Presidents of two of the unions who represent the subset of employees serving Canada abroad, we are now following up to draw your particular attention to the outrageous state of overseas coverage by MSH International, Canada Life's subcontractor.

From day one, MSH International seemed unprepared for the complexity of providing health care to public servants working internationally. In addition to the serious issues raised in the 1 November letter, we have received numerous complaints from members with serious illnesses and conditions who have been unable to reach an MSH agent for months, even after waiting on hold for hours at a time. When they do manage to reach someone, the agent is often unaware of the coverage offered under the plan, forcing us to reach out to Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to help resolve the problems. The situation is particularly difficult for francophone employees, who report that they are often unable to obtain service in French.

While GAC and some other departments have put measures in place to mitigate some of the worst effects on members by providing medical advances and intervening on behalf of employees, these measures would not be necessary if MSH were fulfilling its contracted duties. Furthermore, while such ad hoc solutions are very welcome, they are not uniform across departments, leading to uneven treatment of employees.

This lack of service by MSH is particularly egregious since, unlike colleagues in Canada, those working abroad do not have access to provincial health care and must depend on the PSHCP for their **primary** coverage. Under these circumstances, delays in authorization and repayment can cause not only financial hardship, but serious risks to the health of employees and their dependents. As their Employer, you control their working conditions, and you have a particular responsibility to get this piece right.

We therefore urge you as the President of Treasury Board to hold both Canada Life and its subcontractor MSH International accountable for the many problems that your employees at home and abroad are facing. We would appreciate information on any steps you take.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Pamela Isfeld in black ink.

Pamela Isfeld, President, PAFSO

Handwritten signature of Jenn Carr in black ink.

Jennifer Carr, President, PIPSC

CC Marie-Chantal Girard, Senior Associate Deputy Minister, Employee Relations & Total Compensation, Treasury Board Secretariat and National Joint Council Co-Chair

Francis Trudel, Associate Chief Human Resources Officer, Treasury Board Secretariat

Manon LeBlanc Chief Executive Officer, Federal Public Service Health Care Plan Administration Authority

Philippe de Dreuzy, President and CEO, MHS International (Canada)

Paul A. Mahon, CEO, Canada Life.