



LE GROUPE D'ACTION-SIDA

AIDS ACTION NOW!

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December 14, 1994

Premier Bob Rae
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Rae:

I write on behalf of the steering committee of AIDS ACTION NOW! to congratulate you on your government's commitment to develop a drug plan for the working poor and people with catastrophic illnesses.

As you are aware, AIDS ACTION NOW! has been a persistent advocate of drug program reform. We have pushed hard on this issue because the high cost of treatments is the most significant barrier to health care for many people living with HIV and AIDS in Ontario. We thus welcome your commitment to address this issue. Although we cannot speak for people with other illnesses, we are delighted that you intend to provide relief for everyone whose treatment costs present a barrier to health care.

We at AIDS ACTION NOW! look forward to meeting with government officials in the coming weeks to discuss the features of a drug program which are needed to address the urgent needs of people living with HIV and AIDS.

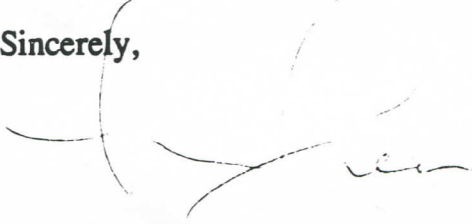
In particular, the program must include:

- 1) A deductible plan which is progressive in design; which has a low-income cut-off to exempt those with financial difficulties from deductibles; which has a maximum deductible to ensure that no-one need invest their life savings in treatments; which entails as little and as unobtrusive paperwork as possible.
- 2) An expansion of the range of products covered for those who currently must rely on a drug card, and for those who will access the new program. The current mechanism for determining formulary coverage is by design conservative. It is

inadequate for an illness like HIV, where the field of treatment is largely experimental and rapidly evolving. We look for a new mechanism - possibly a sub-committee of the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee with front-line knowledge of HIV treatments - to determine funding eligibility.

We appreciate your leadership on this vital issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Freamo', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mark Freamo
Co-Chair

cc: **Minister of Health Ruth Grier**
Ontario AIDS Network Groups
Toronto Primary Care Physicians Group