



AG Sheila Fraser Announces Preliminary Audit of Federal Medical Cannabis Program

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Citing ongoing problems with the federal medical cannabis program and a recent CP article showing that “Health Canada’s program is charging patients dramatically high fees for marijuana that are *15 times* more than what Health Canada is paying for the product”, MP Libby Davies recently repeated her call for an Auditor General investigation of Health Canada’s Marihuana Medical Access Division (MMAD). Last week, Auditor General Sheila Fraser sent Davies some good news.

In a letter dated May 16th, Fraser thanked Davies for her communication, and informed her that the AG’s office is “in the early stages of an audit of certain user fees” associated with Health Canada’s MMAD program.

In her original letter to the Auditor General, Davies stated that “Health Canada is profiting from the few chronic-pain patients that can afford to participate in this program and it is bankrupting those who can not.” She added that “149 patients owe Health Canada \$143,000, and many of those people have been cut off”, and that “there is growing evidence of this program’s failures and I ask again that the thousands of Canadians denied access to this important service finally be served by an investigation into Health Canada’s medical marijuana program.”

The announcement of this audit came a week after the Vancouver Island Compassion Society (www.thevics.com) initiated a constitutional challenge of the MMAD that is being heard in the B.C. Supreme Court. The challenge, which began on the 9th of May and is scheduled to continue until August 10th, will attempt to establish that the federal medical cannabis program is not meeting the constitutional rights of critically and chronically ill Canadians.

Davies is not alone is calling on the AG to investigate this program; Senator Pierre-Claude Nolin (former Chair of the Senate Special Committee on Illegal Drugs), and the Canadian AIDS Society have also called on Auditor General Fraser to initiate a performance audit of this controversial Health Canada program.

To see the AG’s letter announcing the early stages of this audit, please go to: <http://safeaccess.ca/>