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## **New Brunswick Dental Society feels betrayed by Government for second time**

Fredericton, New Brunswick – The New Brunswick Dental Society today expressed dismay and disappointment that yet again, the Provincial Government has reneged on something to which they had previously agreed.

Just prior to Christmas, the Dental Society had agreed to extend their current contract for a month, on the understanding that they had an agreement established for the next year which would bring the government's payment more in line with those in the other Atlantic Provinces. However, earlier this week, the Government completely overlooked that agreement and sent a new "take it or leave it" proposal which would impose co-payments on all patients receiving Social Assistance. An earlier agreement between the two parties reached in August was subsequently rejected by Government in October.

The most recent government proposal would require all patients on Social Assistance to provide a 20% co-payment for all dental services. Those who are unable to pay the difference will either go without needed care, or the additional cost is passed along to the dentist.

"What the Government has done here is nothing short of betrayal," said Dr. Jeff Clark, Vice-President of the New Brunswick Dental Society. "And, they've not only betrayed us but by looking to impose a 20% co-payment for dental services on income assistance recipients, they've completely betrayed their Poverty Reduction Plan."

"We all appreciate the need to curb government spending, however, to do that by imposing it on the backs of those least able to afford it, is absolutely shameful," Dr. Clark added.

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For many years, New Brunswick's dentists have generously subsidized the dental services they provide social assistance recipients across the province. However, in doing so, New Brunswick's dentists who receive less than 70% of their fees for this work, have fallen considerably behind their Atlantic counterparts. Dentists in Nova Scotia receive approximately 80% of their fees; those in PEI receive 80-85%, while those in Newfoundland and Labrador receive 90% of their fees.

"It is clear that the Government misled us before the holidays, with a signal that they were prepared to accept our proposal in the new year, so long as we extended the deadline to January 21st", said Dr. Clark. "We are extremely disappointed that the Minister of Finance believes that this is the way to do business in New Brunswick"

The current contract with government is due to expire on January 21, 2012.

The New Brunswick Dental Society exists to promote professional growth, high ethical standards and quality care giving through communication, education and the regulation of dentistry in New Brunswick.

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# Government Subsidy for Dental Care for Social Assistance Recipients

New Brunswick dentists currently receive on average less than 70% of their regular fees from Government to treat income assistance recipients, while their Atlantic counterparts receive 80-90%. Now, instead of bringing NB Dentists more in line with dentists in other provinces for treatment of patients on income assistance, the provincial government proposes to reduce their support to 56%, with the entire balance being passed along to social assistance recipients.

The NB Dental Society is flatly rejecting this proposal as being grossly unfair to both social assistance recipients and dentists across New Brunswick.

