



Abortion Rights  
Coalition of Canada

Coalition pour le droit à  
l'avortement au Canada

*Your Voice for Choice*

*Canada's only national political pro-choice advocacy group*

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## **Closure of Clinic 554 due to “illegal and heartless” tactics of anti-choice politicians in New Brunswick**

NATIONAL – Clinic 554 in Fredericton New Brunswick, the only clinic providing abortions and LGBTQ2 care in the province, is being forced to close because of the provincial government’s deliberate and long-standing violations of patients’ Charter rights and the *Canada Health Act*. The Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC) says the news is devastating because the clinic’s closure will severely impact accessibility to healthcare for some of the most marginalized communities in New Brunswick.

New Brunswick enforces a 30-year old regulation ([Medical Services Payment Act](#), Chapter M-7, section 2.01) that has the effect of limiting funding of surgical abortions to hospitals, obliging the clinic to pay the cost themselves or charge patients directly. “For decades, every New Brunswick government has been brazenly disobeying the *Canada Health Act* when it comes to abortion care, and discriminating against patients on the basis of gender,” said Joyce Arthur, Executive Director of the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC). “Thousands of NB women and transgender patients have suffered harm and hardship as a result.”

“Do Health Minister Ted Flemming and Premier Blaine Higgs think their personal beliefs against abortion put them above the law and give them impunity to mistreat and punish patients?” Arthur said. “Their tactics are illegal and heartless.”

Arthur pointed out that the Health Minister’s job is to ensure that citizens can access necessary healthcare, but “Ted Flemming is abusing his position to make sure that members of a disadvantaged group **do not** have equitable access to healthcare. His flouting of human rights codes and Charter rights is a disgraceful act of misogyny.”

**The Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada demands that Health Minister Flemming and Premier Higgs immediately rescind the province’s illegal regulation and start funding surgical abortions at Clinic 554. ARCC also demands that the government reimburse Clinic 554 for all medical costs they have had to unjustly bear themselves since the clinic opened in 2015.**

“The federal Liberal government also bears responsibility for the impending closure of Clinic 554. Justin Trudeau and his Health Minister have had four years to intervene and require the province to abide by the *Canada Health Act*, but did virtually nothing,” said Arthur. She said that repeated pleas by ARCC,

Clinic 554, and other groups over the past few years were met with silence and inaction. Only after significantly more pressure this year from many sides, and an ARCC [petition that now has over 29,000 signatures](#), did the federal government finally do something. In July 2019, Health Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor wrote a letter to all provinces asking them to pay fully for abortion services.

“But the letter was weak, and way too little too late,” said Arthur. “The Higgs government of course thumbed its nose at the request, knowing the federal Liberal government had zero leverage because it might get voted out of office in the fall.”

**The Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada calls on whichever federal party wins the Oct 21 election to immediately begin withholding federal transfer payments from the province of New Brunswick. Second, the new government must engage in talks or arbitration with the province to force them to repeal the provincial law restricting abortion payment to hospitals.**

ARCC invites the public to sign its petition to the federal government to ensure abortion funding for Clinic 554. The petition will remain open past the election and will be used to pressure the new government to take action:

[www.change.org/p/government-of-canada-federal-gov-t-take-action-against-nb-for-not-funding-clinic-554](http://www.change.org/p/government-of-canada-federal-gov-t-take-action-against-nb-for-not-funding-clinic-554)

#### Resources and further information:

- ARCC’s petition: [Federal Government Must Ensure Abortion Funding for Clinic 554](#)
- Clinic 554’s petition: [Abortion Access New Brunswick: Repeal Restrictions in 84 20!](#)
- ARCC’s position paper (Feb 2017): [Abortion Clinics Must Be Fully Funded under Canada Health Act](#)
- [ARCC’s Election Toolkit](#)

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