**Letter to Clyde Jackman, Minister of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador**

April 8, 2013

Dear Mr. Jackman,

The Newfoundland and Labrador Health Libraries Association is dismayed by the current government cuts to the Public Library System in Newfoundland and Labrador. Eliminating the jobs of professional librarians and support staff will have an enormous impact on the quality of the services and resources offered to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and therefore on the physical and mental health of our communities whose citizens rely on public libraries for access to valuable consumer health information. Librarians and staff are essential to evaluating, acquiring, and providing access to library materials and resources. Although there are no cuts to the materials budget, the cuts to management positions will severely impact the publics’ access and use of the library materials. This includes professional determination of relevant acquisitions, appropriate access services, and training users in information literacy.

Public libraries are in place to provide opportunities to engage in activities essential to early literacy skills, life long learning, and digital literacy. Many citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador rely on the services and resources provided by the public library system to seek health information, seek and apply for jobs, access unemployment resources, participate in research and develop a love of reading that will serve them their entire lives. With the cuts that have been made, access to these activities will be severely limited.

A prosperous community is one in which its citizens are well informed, knowledgeable and literate. The public libraries lead the way in increasing literacy and access to information, two components essential to the health and economic vitality of a community.

While we understand financial pressure that the government is currently facing, the NLHLA urges you to reconsider the budget cuts to the library system. Investing in our libraries, and therefore investing in our citizens can only create a stronger, more informed, more knowledgeable public.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our position.

Sincerely,

Alison Farrell

President, Newfoundland and Labrador Health Libraries Association