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January 10, 2012

Sent by fax – 416-327-3679

Honourable Deborah Matthews
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

Dear Deborah,

Subject: ORNGE Reduction in Service to Northern Ontario

In October of 2011 ORNGE, in an effort to cut costs, announced the closure of their Moosonee Base of Operations. ORNGE released a request for information (RFI) and later a request for proposal (RFP) to provide rotor wing air ambulance service to the James Bay Coast beginning March 2012.

This is a decrease in quality and level of service provided to the James Bay Coast and many communities such as Kashetchewan, Fort Albany, Attiwapiskat, Moosonee and Moose Factory. Some of these communities have only air or winter road access

The minimum level of care required at the Moosonee base was Advanced Care Flight when ORNGE began to provide all aspects of service. They provided the Sikorsky-76, a medium sized rotor wing aircraft to service the missions, along with two medics on board, one of which was certified ACP(f)(advanced care flight paramedic). The minimum specifications stated in the RFP is single medic PCP(f)(primary care flight paramedic) with 2 pilots and a light twin rotor wing aircraft which is not specified to service 24/7, 365 days a year.

ORNGE now controls all aspects of air ambulance operations and are utilizing the AW 139 and PC12 with crew and support staff providing critical care aircraft. The closest ORNGE base to Moosonee will now be Timmins by April 2012 which currently operates the PC12 fixed wing aircraft only.

The highest level of medical care provided in and around the James Bay coast is in a hospital built on an island with only water and helipad access. This should be justification enough to have a capable rotor wing aircraft with ACP(f) level of service to the area 24/7, 365 days a year.

We ask you to step in and stop this reduction of a vital health care service to this northern Ontario community.

Please contact Ron Smith, CAW Director of Transportation at (416) 495-3794 if you require further information.

Sincerely,

Ken Lewenza
National President

kl:rlcope343

cc: Dr. C. Mazza, President and CEO ORNGE (fax – 416-667-2228)
Jamie Ross, President, CAW Local 2002
Stan Louttit, Grand Chief of the Mushkegowuk Council (fax – 705-658-4250)
Ron Smith, CAW Director of Transportation