

Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister
responsible for the Federal Economic
Development Agency for Northern Ontario



Ministre de l'Emploi et des Familles et ministre
responsable de l'Agence fédérale de développement
économique pour le Nord de l'Ontario

Ottawa Canada K1A 0J9

Rosemary Pawliuk
President
SOCASMA
22879-29B Avenue
Langley BC V2Z 3B1

By email: socasma@outlook.com

Dear Rosemary Pawliuk:

Thank you for your email of April 10, 2026. You wrote about the Canada Student Loan (CSL) Forgiveness and financial challenges faced by Canadians who study medicine abroad. I appreciate you taking the time to share your views on behalf of the Society for Canadians Studying Medicine Abroad (SOCASMA) and welcome the opportunity to respond.

As you know, the Government of Canada recently expanded eligibility for the CSL Forgiveness benefit to help address the shortage of primary health care providers in rural and remote communities. This expansion, which took effect on December 31, 2025, reflects the growing workforce pressures being experienced across these sectors in underserved areas.

Several factors were considered in determining the list of newly eligible occupations. Labour market information was used to identify occupations that are projected to be in shortage in the coming years and those which have been experiencing shortages over the last few years. Extensive consultations with provinces and territories, stakeholders from numerous different professions, and student organizations were also conducted to ensure their voices were heard while the Government examined various options.

Canada

Certain occupations were identified as playing key roles in supporting the implementation of Government of Canada priorities, namely the Canada-wide early learning and child care system, the Canadian Dental Care Plan, and the National Pharmacare Plan.

Although family doctors are eligible for CSL Forgiveness, specialists are not. The Government of Canada acknowledges the recommendation that specialist physicians be included in the list of eligible occupations for CSL forgiveness and recognizes the important role they play in rural and remote communities across the country. Please be assured that the points you raised will be carefully considered as we continue to review and refine program parameters.

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Hajdu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Jobs and Families and
Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario

c.c. The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Finance and National Revenue

The Honourable Marjorie Michel, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health