In order to prepare for the holiday season, we wish to remind primary care physicians of their obligations for regular office and after-hours coverage during this period. Primary Health Care Physicians must ensure that their offices are open for patient care during the holidays as set out in their various agreements.

Additionally, it appears that we may have an earlier influenza season than usual, with the peak of cases happening over the next 1 to 3 weeks. Given that this peak may be at the same time as the holiday season, it is important that patient access to primary health care services is available. If individuals cannot access their regular primary health care provider, they may need to visit an emergency department and this could result in a surge in emergency department visits.

The Telephone Health Advisory Service (THAS) will be providing 24 hour access to health care information and advice for your patients on Tuesday, December 25, 2012, Wednesday, December 26, 2012 and Tuesday, January 1, 2013.

Thank you for addressing this important issue and your commitment to quality and accessible primary care services.