

# THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PAUL MARTIN

December 6, 2010

Dear friends,

I would like to extend to you my encouragement, and commend you for your support of the Vision Institute of Canada's initiative, to make 2011 *Aboriginal Vision Health Awareness Year*.

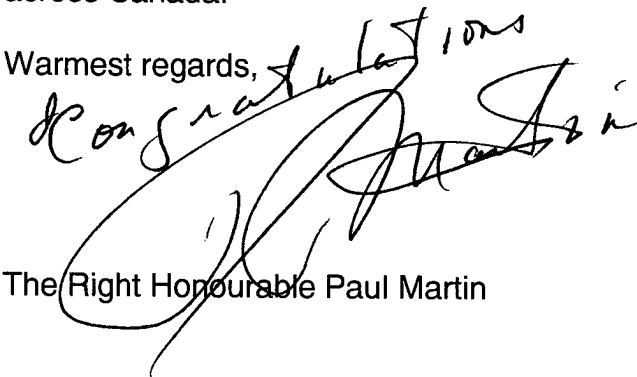
This eye and vision health education program will help raise awareness in the Aboriginal community about the issue of preventable vision loss that is a tragic consequence of the epidemic of diabetes affecting Canada's native people.

Nearly one in five native people are now living with diabetes. It is estimated that 20% of people with diabetes will suffer from vision loss leading to an increased burden of emotional, physical and financial hardships.

Early detection and treatment can significantly reduce the incidence of vision loss due to diabetes. The 2011 *Aboriginal Vision Health Awareness Year* initiative will educate health-care workers, diabetes educators and those involved in health-care policy, about the need for yearly comprehensive eye examinations leading to improved outcomes in eye health.

I fully support this vision health awareness campaign and offer my best wishes to all those working on this initiative so that eye health education can reach all native people across Canada.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Martin', is written over the typed name. The signature is stylized and cursive.

The Right Honourable Paul Martin