

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PAUL MARTIN

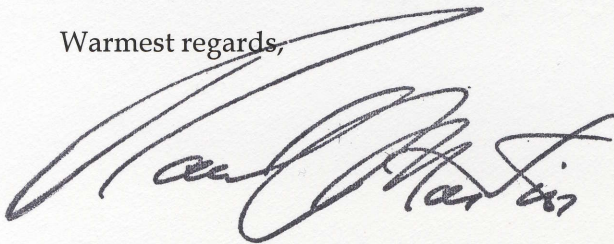
Dear friends,

I want to commend you and the Vision Institute of Canada for undertaking such an important educational programme as the *Aboriginal Vision Health Conference*. It will undoubtedly do much to educate optometrists and hopefully all Canadians about Aboriginal vision health issues. It is a national tragedy that our First Peoples lag so far behind other Canadians in every aspect of healthcare and education. I am active in the field of Aboriginal education and can attest to this personally.

The *Aboriginal Vision Health Conference* will alert optometrists to the importance of early intervention with appropriate vision care services for Aboriginal children (30% of Canada's total Aboriginal population) which will result in much improved vision, health and consequently educational achievement.

I offer my sincere good wishes to all participants for a successful event, which will spark other important initiatives for improving the well-being of the Aboriginal community.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Martin', with a large, sweeping flourish above it.

The Right Honourable Paul Martin