

June 3, 2025

Honourable Josie Osborne
Minister of Health
P.O Box 9050 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

via email: HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Osborne

I wish to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister of Health. We all recognize this portfolio is one of the most challenging, but I have every confidence that you will rise to the challenge.

I am writing today to advocate on behalf of the BC Nurse's Union (BCNU). Last month I had the opportunity to connect with two representatives of the BCNU at the North Central Local Government Association convention in Prince Rupert. I was very pleased to hear positive reports from Teri Forster, North West Regional Council Member and Danette Thomsen, North East Regional Council Member of the BCNU.

Both Teri and Danette spoke with great passion and gratitude regarding the BC Nurse led solution to implementing nurse to patient ratios that will deliver the lifesaving care patients need and deserve. British Columbia is the first Canadian province to implement nurse to patient ratios and will become a model for the entire country.

Another unresolved issue that was discussed, was the current Retention and Recruitment Incentives in the form of "signing bonuses" and "retention" payments. Both BCNU representatives were very grateful that the Nurse Recruitment and Retention bonus was extended from March 21, 2025 until June 20, 2025 but would like to see this staffing tool brought in permanently. As you are probably aware, Mackenzie is blessed to have a full complement of doctors in our community, but we continue to be challenged with filling nurse's positions. Our hospital has come to rely on "agency" nurses (at great expense) when they are available; resulting in ER closures in our community, with the closest alternative 2 hours away.

At our May 26th 2025 Council meeting, Council made a motion to draft a Letter of Support on behalf of the British Columbia Nurses' Union in support of the Provincial Rural Retention Incentive Program. We look forward to your support and attention to this very critical issue.

Kind Regards



Joan Atkinson

Mayor

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I acknowledge that I live and work within the traditional territory of the Tse'khene People of the McLeod Lake Indian Band