



BC Rural Health Network

Thursday, January 20, 2022

Attn: Susan Brown
CEO Interior Health Authority

Re: Interior Health adjusting services to strengthen patient safety

Dear Ms. Brown,

I am writing on behalf of the BC Rural Health Network (BCRHN) which represents the voice of rural British Columbians on healthcare across BC.

The announcement on Tuesday has raised concerns and anxiety for rural residents in the Interior Health Region. The communities immediately and initially impacted by the changes are voicing these concerns. You have acknowledged “We will resume normal operations in impacted communities as soon as possible and in the meantime, we are temporarily reassigning and redeploying staff to sustain essential services throughout the region.” It is also recognized that all served by the Interior Health Authority will be impacted by changes to services in elective surgery and other treatments. Our membership does have questions:

1. Why have all the reductions of inpatient care and hours of critical care operation only occurred in rural BC?
2. Why have the changes been made specifically in rural BC? Is this due to health impacts of Covid-19 in rural BC, or are rural staff being transferred from rural to urban to provide services?
3. What is the current rate of Covid-19 infection in IHA healthcare staff and what is the prognosis and projection of impacts moving forward?
4. How are you measuring/monitoring rural health impacts with these changes?
5. Why is Interior Health Authority not ensuring that New Denver, Ashcroft and Barriere are provided with essential healthcare as a priority in the delivery of service?

The BCRHN have directed our membership to follow the <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/temporary-service-changes> page to understand impacts to them

specifically and as they unfold. However, the BCRHN believes that most residents do not receive information from the Health Authority and that the exchange of information must improve between the IHA and rural BC. The limited ability for authorities to reach most rural residents is a major concern for the BCRHN and for all rural residents. The BCRHN would like to assist the IHA and the Province in reaching more rural residents and believe our grassroots nature creates that ability. We need support and we need immediate answers to be effective in communication between authorities and residents, we want to help.

Our membership includes communities and mayors directly impacted by the decisions made regarding the communities listed in the release. In addition, the residents who reside outside of these communities and are unrepresented and also need crucial information to manage their emergency medical needs.

The BCRHN is committed to ensuring fair and equitable health outcomes and healthcare provision across our Province and acts in the best interest of rural residents at all times. The BCRHN understands we are in exceptional times and that crisis management is not easy. We are not here to cause problems but to create solutions, and we ask that you respond to this letter no later than Friday January 21st, in turn we can respond to our membership before the weekend. We are concerned that there was no consultation prior to your decisions.

The BCRHN is the healthcare voice of the rural residents of British Columbia and seeks better health outcomes for all people, through solutions-based approaches with governments, and information provision to residents.

Yours in Health and Wellness,



Paul Adams
Administrator
250-438-0080

Cc: \ Ed Staples, Colin Moss, Peggy Skelton, Leonard Casley, Ted Patterson, Mayor Ferguson, Mayor Casley, Mayor Zeleznik, Mayor Busse, Mayor Stamer, Mayor Blackwell, Mayor Miller