

February 4, 2022

Mr. Paul Adams
Administrator
BC Rural Health Network
PO Box 257
Princeton, BC V0X 1W0

Sent via email: paul.bcrhn@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Adams,

Thank you for organizing the opportunity for Interior Health and the BC Rural Health Network to connect today. I appreciated the collaborative approach and the thoughtfulness for which the BC Rural Health Network advocates on behalf of rural communities in our region.

I was pleased to explain how the Omicron wave of COVID-19 has significantly increased staffing pressures across Interior Health, and our obligation to protect the safety of patients and clients by temporarily closing some services to keep essential health services open. Thank you for your support and understanding today and for appreciating that Interior Health needed to take swift action as the Omicron wave of sick calls, community transmission, and subsequent outbreaks and hospitalizations swept through the Interior. I assure you, resumption planning is already underway and we will return to normal operations as soon as we can.

We have already made some positive progress since announcing the temporary reductions two weeks ago. By working with our teams and local leaders, we have not proceeded with plans to close inpatient services in Invermere. We have also clarified that primary care physician services and access to laboratory services is continuing at the Barriere Health Centre, along with the COVID-19 testing and immunization clinics.

Rural care is crucial for many people and these services play an important role across Interior Health. I would like to reassure your membership that Interior Health is working hard to resume suspended services and strengthen their reliability when they reopen. By stabilizing our staffing, our objective is to prevent short notice closures so people can depend on the services they need.

Interior Health looks forward to future conversations with the BC Rural Health Network as we gradually resume normal operations. Thank you again for your leadership and health care advocacy throughout the Interior region.

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We recognize and acknowledge that we are collectively gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the seven Interior Region First Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate, and work together. This region is also home to 15 Chartered Métis Communities. It is with humility that we continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples across the Interior.

Sincerely,



Susan Brown
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc: BCRHN Executive: Ed Staples, Colin Moss, Peggy Skelton, Leonard Casley
Mayor Ferguson, Mayor Casley, Mayor Zeleznik, Mayor Busse, Mayor Stamer, Mayor
Blackwell, Mayor Miller

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