



January 15, 2024

Honourable Adrian Dix
Minister of Health and Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs
Parliament Buildings Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
Dear Minister Dix:

Thank you for agreeing to continue to serve as Minister of Health and Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.

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- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.
- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

Coming out of the pandemic, healthcare workers are stressed and tired – and the pandemic is not over for them. Illness taking colleagues off the floor of hospitals and acute care facilities has increased burdens on those left behind, resulting in more people taking needed leave, but leaving behind understaffed sites and, in more rural areas of the province, closures of essential health care sites.

Adding to the challenges, because of the opportunities available here, our province is growing quickly, adding 100,000 people last year alone. All of these new arrivals will need family doctors and urgent health care if they get sick. This pressure isn't going to let up – it's expected that this year's numbers will be similar.

Short, medium, and long-term responses are needed. In the immediate term, by building on our work to ensure regulatory bodies recognize the credentials of new arrivals with experience and training in health care so that they're helping out instead of working low-wage jobs in another sector, we can provide support to over-burdened workers almost immediately. This work must continue and expand.

In the medium term, continuing to support our historic expansions in medical training for doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals will deliver more workers as they graduate and begin work.

Over the long term, our Health Human Resources Strategy, with important measures like the new medical school at Simon Fraser University's Surrey campus, will help build the next generation of healthcare practitioners to care for all of us. These new healthcare

workers will need sites to work, so continuing our work to build needed health care facilities, community health centres, and hospitals across the province and in fast growing communities is also vital.

Since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including:

- Working with the Provincial Health Officer, front-line healthcare workers, and community leaders across the province to protect people during the COVID-19 pandemic, including by providing more than 13 million publicly-funded vaccinations to people across B.C.
- Implementing a surgical renewal strategy that has made significant progress towards completing surgeries postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Reversing the damage done to our public health system and healthcare workers through the previous government's breaking of contracts by bringing long-term care aides, housekeeping, and dietary hospital workers back into the public health care system.
- Developing innovative new approaches to strengthen our public health care system and address the need for more skilled healthcare workers, including expanding pharmacists' scope of practice to allow them to renew prescriptions, while expanding our ability to train the workers we need with hundreds of new seats in medical schools, nursing programs, and allied health-related programs.
- Building new and modernized hospitals in communities across B.C. as part of our government's record capital plan.

As you continue to make progress on items in your previous mandate letter, over the remaining period of this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- Continue your work with the Provincial Health Officer to control the spread of COVID-19 in B.C. and prepare our province for any future pandemic, including by continuing to provide free COVID-19 boosters and flu vaccines to all British Columbians.
- Increase the number of British Columbians with access to a doctor by recruiting and supporting more family doctors with the new payment model for family physicians, building new First Nations primary care centres, and building on other methods of delivering health care at the community level in partnership with medical professionals.

- Identify and employ best practices related to data-informed health care programs, working with internal and external experts.
- Continue work to complete all surgeries postponed because of COVID-19 and then implement new targets to reduce surgical wait times in B.C.
- Make British Columbia a leader in the full continuum of cancer care by launching a 10-year cancer action plan and identify near-term opportunities to improve services.
- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity and in consultation with partners, address gaps in health care services experienced by women, trans, and non-binary people.
- Continue to strengthen ambulance services in urban and rural communities.
- Continue our government's record investments in building and modernizing hospitals in rural and urban communities and work to deliver new facilities as quickly as possible.
- Make prescription contraception free for all.
- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors' Services and Long-Term Care, continue work to improve care for seniors through investments in new public long-term care homes, work toward eliminating multi-bedrooms in public facilities, improve accountability for private operators of long-term care homes, and expand publicly funded home care.
- Make it easier and faster for healthcare workers who trained in other countries to work in B.C.'s health care system.
- Implement the comprehensive Health Human Resources Strategy to make sure our public health care system has the skilled workers required to provide the care people need now and into the future.
- Support the work of the Minister of Housing to better coordinate services to deliver improved outcomes for people living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, in collaboration with the Ministers of Mental Health and Addictions, Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and Public Safety and Solicitor General, as well as Indigenous Peoples, external partners, and others.
- Support the work of the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives to ensure new measures address systemic racism in the health care system.

- Support the work of the Minister of Post-Secondary and Future Skills to continue to advance work to launch B.C.'s second medical school in Surrey.
- Support the work of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to continue to lead and accelerate B.C.'s response to the illicit drug toxicity crisis across the full continuum of care: prevention, harm reduction, safe supply, treatment, and recovery.

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors' Services and Long-Term Care and a Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health. You will work closely together and ensure your Parliamentary Secretaries receives appropriate support to deliver on the priorities outlined in the mandate letter issued to them.

Our work together must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated by this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual Cabinet and Treasury Board oversight and include measurable outcomes for British Columbians. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by Cabinet.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the Members' Conflict of Interest Act. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions

in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Eby", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier