



January 16, 2025

Honourable Josie Osborne
Minister of Health
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Osborne:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Health at a critical time for our province. Serving as a member of the executive council is a privilege and responsibility which I am confident you will fulfill with integrity and a commitment to the people of our province.

British Columbians have trusted us with a mandate to deliver for them in ways that make a tangible difference in their daily lives. They expect us to listen and learn from people of different perspectives – and work together to make things better for everyone.

Specifically, we will tackle the challenges people worry about at the kitchen table:

- **Grow the economy by creating good jobs across British Columbia.** We will collaborate with businesses, workers, and communities to attract investments in both new and traditional sectors as well as emerging sectors of the economy. This approach will bring certainty for business, security for workers, and generate the wealth needed to support the essential services British Columbians rely on.
- **Reduce costs for families** including by helping people access homes they can afford through support for first-time homebuyers, increasing the supply of rental housing stock, and stronger measures to crack down on housing speculation.

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- **Strengthen health care** by expanding access to family doctors and recruiting and training more health professionals, ensuring that every British Columbian can access the care they need, no matter where they live. We will also increase access to addictions treatment and provide help for people whose struggles require intensive supports.
- **Make our neighbourhoods and communities safer** by working with law enforcement and social agencies to address street disorder, crack down on organized crime, and do all we can to ensure repeat offenders stay behind bars.

Our commitment to take action on climate change remains foundational and will be key to a healthy and prosperous BC for future generations.

Underlying all this work is our partnership with Indigenous peoples. Advancing reconciliation, implementing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and working in partnership with First Nations rights-holders to advance shared interests is the responsibility of every Minister.

Over this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- In order to protect key services that British Columbians rely on, work with the Minister of Finance to review all existing Ministry of Health programs and initiatives to ensure programs support the health of British Columbians while keeping costs manageable. This is important in the context of current Provincial budget constraints, our growing and aging population, and emerging technologies.
- Tackle the training, recruitment, retention, and system redesign needed to make sure our health human resources keep pace with the growing needs of people in BC and deliver better, faster care.
- Ensure every British Columbian has access to primary care, continue connecting more and more people to family healthcare providers, and ensure that care can be delivered in person through standards established in consultation with the College of Physicians and Surgeons and Doctors of BC.
- Take necessary steps to address temporary emergency room closures.
- Improve cancer care delivery across the province to meet international benchmarks for outcomes and service delivery.

- Improve the delivery of maternity care, reproductive care, and gynecological cancer care for people across the province through targeted initiatives.
- Work with Indigenous communities and leadership to improve health outcomes for Indigenous peoples in our province.
- Improve the delivery of care for seniors and steward public investments made in seniors' care to improve efficiency and effectiveness given the growing population of seniors in our province.
- Reduce the cost of administration of the health care system to focus resources on the front line, including a review of Regional Health Authorities, and incorporating an active role for doctors, nurses, and Health Science professionals in designing and implementing healthcare solutions.
- Require professional colleges to recognize the credentials of Canadian healthcare workers immediately on confirmation of their good standing in another province or territory, and to recognize the credentials of international healthcare workers from foreign jurisdictions with similar or equivalent training programs within six weeks.
- Continue working collaboratively with stakeholders on initiatives to strengthen nurse-to-patient ratios.
- Support the work of the Chief Scientific Advisor for Psychiatry, Toxic Drugs and Concurrent Disorders in delivering high-quality care for people struggling with acquired brain injury, addiction, and mental health challenges – and work with partners across government to implement solutions.
- Bring together addiction health professionals and epidemiologists to expand peer-reviewed research to evaluate interventions for people struggling with addiction, and promptly implement best practices based on findings.
- Continue our work to build and deliver a seamless system of care for people seeking mental health and addiction services in the province on both an inpatient and outpatient basis, including services responsive to the unique needs of Indigenous peoples.
- Reduce the risk of diversion of prescribed opioids by taking action in these areas and any others identified: first, by identifying and implementing additional safeguards to prevent diversion of opioids prescribed for opioid dependence

treatment; and second, by working with all healthcare providers to find ways to reduce the population level frequency of opioid prescriptions generally.

- Review prescribing safety initiatives for psychoactive medications in order to enhance patient and public safety and reduce healthcare costs.
- Continue to expand access to nasal naloxone to respond to overdoses.
- Work with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and with Indigenous peoples, key stakeholders and people with lived experience, to realign and improve services for children and youth with support and mental health needs.
- Work with the Cabinet Committee on Community Safety to ensure that initiatives identified by the committee are prioritized and delivered by your ministry as required.

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health and Addictions whose focus will be to:

- Work with you to ensure that the voices of key stakeholders, including addictions and mental health doctors and other medical professionals, people with lived experience, families, and public health officials, are included in our ongoing policy and legislative response to people in crisis due to addiction and mental health.
- Ensure that issues and opportunities identified are communicated to you and ministry staff for consideration and possible implementation.

You are also assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health whose focus will be to:

- Work with you to engage with key stakeholders, including frontline service providers in rural and Indigenous communities, to seek their advice on how best to deliver accessible, effective care in their unique rural and remote communities.
- Ensure that issues and opportunities identified are communicated to you and ministry staff for consideration and possible implementation.

Additionally, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors' Services and Long-Term Care whose focus will be to:

- Work with you to engage with service providers, advocates, and seniors to identify opportunities for improving seniors' care across the province and opportunities for

delivering this care in a way that is cost-effective and preserves dignity for our valued elders.

- Ensure that issues and opportunities identified are communicated to you and ministry staff for consideration and possible implementation.

You will work closely together and ensure your Parliamentary Secretaries receive appropriate support to deliver on this work.

As you are aware, we have established an accord with the BC Green Caucus that supports our shared commitment to ensuring stable governance focused on delivering progress and tangible outcomes for British Columbians. The commitments in that accord complement the direction in these mandate letters.

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 work we have ahead takes place in a profoundly challenging geopolitical environment. Close friends and neighbours to our south are contemplating imposing draconian tariffs on our products that would hurt both Americans and Canadians. Our allies internationally face governmental instability. Hate and racism are on the rise around the world. Artificial intelligence breakthroughs with unclear implications and astonishing potential are announced daily. Global inflation, snarled supply chains, and war are threatening global economic growth and prosperity as well as the transition to a low-carbon economy.

We have an obligation to protect and defend British Columbians, as well as seize opportunities, in these uncertain times.

The good news is that we have everything we need to succeed, and we will succeed. British Columbia's people – our workers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, artists, and innovators – are among the most talented in the world. We are home to world-class educational institutions and public services. Our natural beauty is unmatched, we have internationally envied resources, and we are one of the most diverse places on the planet. Your job is to help us leverage these advantages in perilous times.

Use this mandate letter to guide your work, and do not be afraid to challenge assumptions, or be innovative, bold and aggressive in achieving the goals set out for you and your Ministry by the people of this province.

Thank you for joining me in the work ahead.

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

cc: Amna Shah, MLA
Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health and Addictions

Debra Toporowski, MLA
Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health

Susie Chant, MLA
Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors' Services and Long-Term Care and responsible
for the Consular Corps