

**DISTRICT OF 100 MILE HOUSE****FOR INFORMATION CORRESPONDENCE – December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Received December 9<sup>th</sup> - Regular Council Meeting**

- Correspondence from The Fireweed Circle
  - RE: Palestine and the Gaza War
- Correspondence from the Cariboo Brain Injury Association
  - RE: Support & Donations
- Correspondence from the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides
  - RE: New Graduate
- Correspondence from Representative for Children & Youth
  - RE: We are not looking away
- Correspondence from Village of Nakusp, City of Pitt Meadows, Town of View Royal, District of Central Saanich, Village of Radium Hot Springs, City of Quesnel, and Municipal Insurance Association of BC
  - RE: Bill M216- 2025 Professional Reliance Act
- BC Rural Health Network – December Newsletter

November 2025

District of 100 Mile  
#1-385 Birch Ave  
100 Mile House, BC

Attention:

Mayor Maureen Pinkney via [mpinkney@100milehouse.com](mailto:mpinkney@100milehouse.com)

Dear Ms Pinkney

Re: Palestine and the Gaza War

Further to your discussions with Saturn Zezza and Karl Lundsbye, please find attached a proposed letter to the Prime Minister of Canada from the District of 100 Mile House.

As you may be aware, we (The Fireweed Circle, a group of local citizens) organized a Vigil for Palestine on November 02. The event was well attended and the public response was positive. Donations of over \$1500 was received and sent to the Palestinian Childrens' Relief Fund.

We are requesting the District of 100 Mile House send the proposed letter to the Prime Minister.

As locally elected leaders of our community, we believe it would be responsible and appropriate for the town councillors to approve the communication to the Prime Minister on this serious humanitarian matter.

The fact that the conflict is far from our town and country doesn't mean it is not negatively affecting many in this community.

If you would like to suggest any edits or rewording to the attached letter, please let us know. We are open to feedback and happy to make adjustments.

We would also like to invite the Mayor to consider signing the Apartheid-Free Communities pledge, a public commitment to uphold human rights and equality for all, and to stand in solidarity with communities striving for justice and peace.

A few of us could attend a council meeting to comment further on this request.

Yours truly,

Prime Minister Mark Carney  
Parliament Building  
Ottawa

Dear Sir

Re: Palestine

We write concerning the conflict in Palestine: Gaza and the Occupied Territories.

The District of 100 Mile House BC is a small town of about 2,000 and area population of about 20,000.

Members of our community held a Vigil for Palestine on November 02, 2025, and received positive support for the event and raised over \$1500 for the Palestinian Childrens' Relief Fund.

As town councillors and community leaders, we applaud the efforts of our community members that demonstrated empathy for the civilian victims of the Gaza conflict, that includes many thousands of children.

The United Nations and many countries have concluded the Israeli response to the Hamas attack on October 07, 2023 is defined as genocide of Palestinians. Canada's official recognition of the state of Palestine at the United Nations follows the international outcry over the war waged in Gaza and the impact on civilians.

The humanitarian disaster as a result of this war has struck at the hearts of many of our community members.

Therefore as elected leaders of our town, we call upon our federal government to make Canada's humanitarian relief efforts for Palestinian victims a priority;

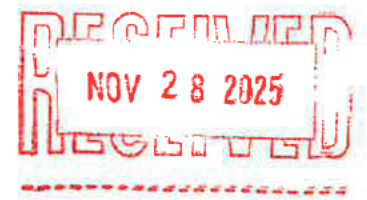
We also request that Canada prioritize diplomatic and economic pressure on the Israeli government and Palestinian leaders, for long lasting Peace Solutions, based on the Treaties and Agreements that both Parties agreed to and signed over that past several decades.

Yours truly,

Cariboo Brain Injury Association  
PO Box 581  
4579 Caverly Rd  
Lac La Hache BC V0K-1T0

25 Nov 2025

To: Treasurer / President  
District of 100 Mile  
385 Birch Ave  
100 Mile House BC V0K 2E1



Dear Treasurer / President

I trust this letter finds you well. I am writing to you on behalf of the Cariboo Brain Injury Association, an organization committed to providing essential peer support and care for individuals living with brain injuries and their dedicated caregivers.

At the Cariboo Brain Injury Association, we understand the unique challenges and struggles faced by those affected by brain injuries. Through our peer support programs, we offer a lifeline of understanding, empathy, and guidance to individuals navigating the often-complex journey of brain injury recovery. Additionally, we provide valuable resources and support for caregivers who play an integral role in the lives of their loved ones.

Our peer support initiatives aim to create a nurturing environment where individuals with brain injuries can connect with others who share similar experiences, fostering a sense of community, belonging, and hope.

However, sustaining and expanding these vital services requires ongoing financial support from compassionate individuals and organizations like **District of 100 Mile**. Your generous donation will enable us to continue offering these essential programs, reaching more individuals in need and making a meaningful difference in their lives and in our communities.

We deeply appreciate your consideration of our request for support. Your generosity will directly impact the lives of those affected by brain injuries, including strokes, offering them hope, healing, and the opportunity to thrive in the face of adversity. If you choose to send a donation an E-transfer can be sent to [Treasurer@CaribooBrainInjury.com](mailto:Treasurer@CaribooBrainInjury.com) or a cheque mailed to the address above. Tax receipts available upon request

Thank you for your kindness and compassion. Together, we can make a significant difference in the lives of individuals and families affected by brain injuries.

Warm regards,

  
Mike Dewing – Chair  
Cariboo Brain Injury Association / [www.CaribooBrainInjury.com](http://www.CaribooBrainInjury.com)

RECEIVED  
NOV 27 2025  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_



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Oakville, ON L6K 0G6

905-842-2891

1-800-768-3030

Fax: 905-842-3373

TTY: 905-842-1585

[www.dogguides.com](http://www.dogguides.com)

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Charitable Tax Number:

Lions Foundation  
of Canada Dog Guides  
13024 5129 RR0001

To Whom It May Concern:

Our client is finally returning home with their Dog Guide, as a new Dog Guide Team. It has been a long and demanding stay at the training facility, as working with a Dog Guide takes patience, responsibility and a great deal of hard work.

All of our graduates have a full understanding of what is expected of them when returning home. It is with your co-operation and help that we see to it that they succeed in working with their dog.

The adjustment of the dog to a new home environment is not always automatic. The relationship between handler and Dog Guide is starting to develop, however it takes time for things to develop and to settle in. We look at a good year before a team really comes together as a good working unit. So again, please be patient as they learn to work together and listen to the handler as they have been trained to properly work with the Dog Guide.

One of the things that you must be aware of is the bond the two must develop. This is the key factor to a successful team – the close relationship between dog and handler. Others getting too close and attached to the dog may cause a disturbance in their relationship. That is why the dog's handler must carry through the daily routine; feeding, relief, grooming and walking.

The importance of developing a good bond also means that you must listen to the instructions of the handler when it comes to your contact with the dog. These dogs are not pets. We have carefully instructed the handler on how to build the bond with their dog, and other people playing and petting the dog excessively can interfere with this bond developing. Overly excessive contact from you can be detrimental to the development of the team, and can ultimately lead to the dog being returned to Dog Guides Canada. In certain weather conditions and other circumstances, the handler may require additional help, however please wait for them to ask for this help.

Thank you so much for your help.

Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides

Accredited members of:



AFP



# **RC&Y** Representative for Children & Youth

## **INVITATION: WE ARE NOT LOOKING AWAY - VIRTUAL CONVENING**

**Addressing Violence in the Lives of Children and Youth**

**Wednesday, December 10, 2025 | 9:00–12:00 PT | Virtual via Zoom**

Dear Colleague,

You're invited to the first session in our first **We Are Not Looking Away** series. These quarterly gatherings will bring together knowledge keepers, practitioners, researchers, politicians and leaders across sectors to deepen connection, strengthen shared understanding, and lean into the collective responsibilities at the heart of the *Don't Look Away* report

One of the most significant reports since the inception of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth, [\*Don't Look Away: How one boy's story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth\*](#), changed our hearts and minds. Many of you have shared how Colby's story has stayed with you and influenced your work. His preventable death broke all of our hearts, and it exposed, with painful clarity, how our systems continue to fall short of what young people need and deserve. *Don't Look Away* called for a transformation toward a North Star of child and youth well-being and the development of an accountability approach that helps us understand our progress. This work requires rethinking the values, principles, and mental models that shape how we care for children, youth, and families across the province.

The We Are Not Turning Away series and sessions will build on the momentum and clarity that emerged from our July convening, where we came together to mark the first anniversary of the release of *Don't Look Away*. Many of you told us that staying connected matters, and that the work feels different, deeper, and more possible when we learn with one another and hold these responsibilities collectively.

In *Don't Look Away*, violence emerged as a central and cross-cutting theme. Responsibility for addressing violence in the lives of children and youth is shared across multiple parts of our service infrastructure. This session invites everyone to continue looking closely at what we are seeing, to understand what may be shifting, and to consider how we can keep attention and commitment to ending violence at the forefront.

**Session Focus:** Addressing Violence in the Lives of Children and Youth

**Date:** December 10, 2025

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (PT)

**Format:** Zoom online convening (<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/nSHO1yktTMWlcfGQV365PQ>)

### **What to Expect**

A reflective, relational, and system-focused conversation that includes:

- Time to connect and build relationships
- A framing presentation on how we got here and why this work matters

- A fireside-style dialogue with leaders whose work intersects with safety, violence prevention, and healing
- Small-group conversations to deepen shared understanding and surface possibilities for collective action

### **Who This Is For**

We will be hosting a space that is relevant and productive for practitioners, leaders, policymakers, community partners, Elders, Matriarchs, knowledge keepers, and others who work across the multiple sectors supporting children, youth and families: child welfare, education, health, mental health, justice, housing, violence prevention, poverty reduction, and community services. All are welcome as we build a bigger circle.

We also recognize that many people carry their own lived experiences of intimate partner and family violence. While those experiences will shape and deepen this work and participants' contributions, this convening is not designed to be a therapeutic or personal story-sharing space. Rather, it is a systemic conversation focused on learning, connection, and collective responsibility.

Please feel free to forward to your colleagues and professional networks.

### **Accessibility**

We are committed to hosting an accessible online gathering. A PDF of the framing presentation will be shared with participants in advance. Closed captioning and Zoom translated captions will be available during the session. If you have any additional accessibility requirements or questions, don't hesitate to contact my colleague, Tracey Eyles, Knowledge Mobilization Advisor, at [Tracey.Eyles@rcybc.ca](mailto:Tracey.Eyles@rcybc.ca).

If you require interpretation, please let us know at least two weeks before the session so we can explore available options.

### **Registration**

To register, please use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/nSH01ykITMWJcIGQV365PQ>

**After you've registered, you will receive a confirmation email from Zoom with your personalized Zoom link and 'add to calendar' link.**

We look forward to being with you.

Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth  
Representative for Children and Youth



THE VILLAGE OF  
**NAKUSP**

November 20, 2025

To my fellow small community colleagues,

It my pleasure to be reaching out to you from the UBCM Executive as your Small Community Representative.

We had our first executive meeting in Richmond last week, and I wanted to touch base with you for a few reasons:

- First of all, I would like all of you to know that I am here for you: if you would like to discuss what's going on in your community, if there is work that UBCM can assist you with, or if you just need someone to talk to about the challenges of local government. My cell phone number and email are below. Please feel free to reach out anytime.
- Second, I want to share what we your executive is doing; please see my notes below.
- Lastly, I would like to set up regular virtual check-ins for us small community folks throughout the year. If you would be interested in joining for an hour or so in the near future, *please RSVP to my email to say so and include a few topics of interest*, so I can facilitate a loose agenda.

Thank you for your support in taking on this important role at UBCM, and please know that I am here to support you in the important work you are doing in your own community.

Here is some of what we covered at the November UBCM Executive Meeting:

- analysis of our 2024 and 2025 resolutions from convention
- UBCM's response to the proposed changes to the Heritage Conservation Act: <https://conta.cc/4hWb0v3>
- received a delegation from Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs, Christine Boyle and Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities, Brittney Anderson,
- endorsed the creation of a new committee to support local government engagement in the development of a comprehensive emergency management plan
- endorsed an extension of the end date of the Local Government Advisory Committee on Emergency and Disaster Management Act (EDMA) Regulations until June 30, 2026
- approved the Gitaanmax Band for membership, and
- arranged a workshop with legal counsel on the Cowichan Tribes Supreme Court decision at the February executive meeting.

For more detailed information about UBCM's ongoing work, subscribe to The Compass, our periodical newsletter, here: <https://www.ubcm.ca/thecompass>

Aidan McLaren-Caux

UBCM Small Community Representative

Councillor

Village of Nakusp

PO Box 280, 91 1st Street NW, Nakusp, BC V0G 1R0

Phone: 250-265-3689. Cell: 250-265-8764 Fax: 250-265-3788

Email: [amclarencaux@nakusp.com](mailto:amclarencaux@nakusp.com)

Web: [www.nakusp.com](http://www.nakusp.com)



*City of Pitt Meadows*  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 26, 2025

File: 01-0400-20/25

Honourable Christine Boyle  
Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs  
Email: HMA.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Boyle,

**Re: Concerns Regarding Bill M 216 – 2025 Professional Reliance Act**

On behalf of Pitt Meadows City Council, I am writing to express our concerns with Bill M 216 – 2025 Professional Reliance Act. We understand that the intent of the Bill is to streamline approvals and reduce administrative costs for development. The approach proposed in this legislation, however, is likely to have the opposite effect and create unnecessary risks to both human and environmental health.

Bill M 216 mandates that a local government must accept any submission by a certifying professional (e.g., an architect, engineer, agrologist or environmental consultant) as part of a development approval process. It also prohibits a local government from requiring a peer review of those submissions. As a result, Bill M 216 significantly reduces local government oversight over development projects. This will negatively affect public safety and create new liability for the City and, by extension, local taxpayers.

The City of Pitt Meadows, like many local governments, has been working to improve development approval processes in alignment with local and provincial housing goals, while maintaining public safety and environmental sustainability. We support improvements to the development approval process, but efficiencies cannot come at the expense of due diligence, public health and informed local decision-making. Many certifying professionals, despite their expertise, may not be familiar with local conditions, City bylaws, development permit guidelines, and floodplain requirements, or other community-specific regulations, which is a key reason why local government reviews are essential to ensure accuracy and compliance. Local review processes benefit the public

by helping build safer and more sustainable neighbourhoods that reflect community needs and protect the environment over the long-term.

### **Challenges with the Professional Reliance Model**

Reviewing building and infrastructure plans to safeguard public safety, the natural environment and local agriculture is an important role of local government. As part of these processes, our City staff frequently identify errors in plans and reports prepared by certifying professionals. We also note that these professionals often face pressure from their clients to sign-off on projects quickly and within budget.

In addition, while used infrequently, peer reviews can be an important part of the process to reduce risk and mitigate errors, particularly for more complex developments or projects with greater safety and environmental hazards. Under Bill M 216, these critical local safeguards are weakened, if not eliminated. Oversight responsibility shifts from the public sector—where it is transparent and democratically accountable—to the private sector, where the primary duty is to the client rather than the broader community.

Bill M 216 contradicts extensive evidence that demonstrates the limitations and failures of professional reliance. In 2018, the Province received a report on professional reliance in the natural resource sector that explicitly warned of “significant gaps in professional reliance models” and “substandard professional work.”<sup>1</sup> The report noted various high-profile environmental incidents, including the Mount Polley Tailings Storage Facility breach and the contamination of the Hullcar Aquifer, that had drawn public scrutiny and brought to light decreased confidence in professional reliance regulatory regimes. The report noted that when government cannot request information or verify compliance, it “loses its ability to prevent harm from occurring and is left only with enforcement tools after harm has occurred.”

While we understand that changes to the professional reliance framework were made in response to this 2018 report (e.g., the enactment of the Professional Governance Act and establishment of the office of the superintendent of professional governance), these changes were not intended to replace government review and oversight.

To that end, a 2022 report from the Ombudsperson on the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation found persistent non-compliance, high rejection rates and a need for greater

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<sup>1</sup> Professional Reliance Review: The Final Report of the Review of Professional Reliance in Natural Resource Decision-Making ([professionalgovernancebc.ca/app/uploads/sites/498/2019/05/Professional\\_Reliance\\_Review\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://professionalgovernancebc.ca/app/uploads/sites/498/2019/05/Professional_Reliance_Review_Final_Report.pdf))

government oversight of qualified professionals.<sup>2</sup> The report stated that the effectiveness and accountability of the riparian regulation depend on qualified professionals following regulatory requirements. It also noted that, due to ongoing deficiencies, the Province has had to review all submissions from these professionals.

This highlights a clear and deeply concerning contradiction: professional reliance has been shown to require more oversight at the provincial level, yet Bill M 216 shifts the professional reliance model onto local governments without the safeguards the Province itself determined were necessary.

### **Liability for Local Governments and Taxpayers**

Local government reviews of building and infrastructure plans help to prevent safety issues, environmental damage, infrastructure failures and costly problems in the future. If local governments are required to accept professionally certified plans, including plans for City infrastructure provided through development, significant errors and deficiencies may go undetected. This introduces significant and unacceptable risks for local governments and taxpayers who would be left with the cost of resolving any deficiencies, particularly if the professional, or their company, is unavailable to be held accountable.

Although Bill M 216 states that local governments will not be liable for damages caused by professional certification, legal experts have advised that, in the context of existing case law, the City would still carry liability where a builder, owner, subcontractor or qualified professional is dissolved or insolvent. The attempt in Bill M 216 to protect local governments from liability, furthermore, does not prevent a party from naming the City in its claim, and the City would be required to go through a costly court process to be removed from the action.

### **Inefficiencies and Processing Delays**

It appears that the only remedy available under Bill M 216 to a local government who is concerned about the quality or accuracy of a professional certification is to refer the matter to the provincial Superintendent of Professional Governance for dispute resolution.

The Superintendent of Professional Governance is an office established by the Professional Governance Act to provide oversight of professional regulators. The office focuses on professional regulation, not the subject matter expertise applied by regulated

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<sup>2</sup> Final Report on the Implementation of Recommendations from Striking a Balance: The Challenges of Using a Professional Reliance Model in Environmental Protection – British Columbia's Riparian Areas Regulation ([bcombudsperson.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/StrikingABalance-Report-Jan5.pdf](https://bcombudsperson.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/StrikingABalance-Report-Jan5.pdf))

professionals. The Superintendent does not employ experts who could settle a dispute between two or more professionals about the technical aspects of a development proposal.

Requiring the Superintendent to resolve potential disputes from the 161 municipalities and 27 regional districts across the Province will almost certainly lead to increased inefficiencies and processing delays, exacerbating the very issue Bill M 216 seeks to address.

### **Loss of Local Knowledge and Authority**

Bill M 216 shifts decision-making away from local governments, and places greater authority in the hands of private professionals. Additionally, shifting dispute resolution to the Superintendent of Professional Governance means moving responsibility away from those most familiar with the local geography and community dynamics. Instead, it places it with a provincial government office that would have no such knowledge or understanding.

Bill M 216 exemplifies the ongoing and concerning shift in decision-making powers from local governments to a centralized provincial authority. This shift is eroding the essential role of locally grounded knowledge—which is fundamental to ensuring developments fit their context, respect environmental constraints and meet the unique needs of the community.

### **Lack of Clarity and Consideration of other Legislation**

Many aspects of Bill M 216, including its relationship to existing legislation that governs development approval processes, remain unclear. For example, it is not clear whether the requirement to accept professional submissions would apply to development permit approvals under the *Local Government Act*. Additionally, it is unclear how Bill M 216 might impact the matters to be considered by an approving officer for subdivision under the *Land Title Act*.

We understand that Bill M 216 has not benefited from the input of provincial staff, who could probably assist provincial elected officials in identifying additional concerns with Bill M 216, and its implications for other provincial legislation.

### **Absence of Consultation with Local Governments**

The City of Pitt Meadows was not consulted prior to the introduction of Bill M 216, nor, as we understand, were any of our local government colleagues across the province. Significant legislative changes affecting development, land use and municipal authority

must be developed collaboratively with local governments. Meaningful consultation is essential to avoid unintended consequences and ensure legislation achieves its stated goals.

In closing, the City of Pitt Meadows supports efforts to reduce duplication, improve timeliness and accelerate housing delivery. However, these goals must be achieved through collaborative, evidence-based approaches that do not weaken local government oversight and create public safety concerns.

We urge the provincial government to reconsider this Bill and engage directly with municipalities before moving forward with changes that fundamentally alter local land use authority and the development process.

Sincerely,



Nicole MacDonald  
Mayor, City of Pitt Meadows

cc: Pitt Meadows City Council  
Mark Roberts, CAO  
David Eby, Premier of British Columbia  
Brittney Anderson, Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities  
Lisa Beare, MLA for Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows  
George Anderson, MLA for Nanaimo-Lantzville  
Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills  
BC Municipalities & Regional Districts  
Councillor Cori Ramsay, Union of BC Municipalities President  
Councillor Paul Albrecht, LMLGA President



## TOWN OF VIEW ROYAL

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November 27, 2025

Written Submission of Mayor Tobias

Town Of View Royal

### **RE: Bill M-216 – Professional Reliance Act**

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#### **I. Introduction**

As Mayor of the Town of View Royal, I submit the following concerns regarding Bill M-216.

While framed as a measure to improve efficiency within development approvals, this Bill removes municipal authority and oversight without public demand, municipal request, or evidence demonstrating that such governance restructuring is necessary or beneficial. It conflicts with the foundational responsibilities established under the Community Charter and continues a legislative direction that diminishes local democratic decision-making in favour of private and industry interests.

#### **II. An Unusual Legislative Pathway**

It is unusual for legislation with province-wide impact on governance structures to be introduced as a Private Member's Bill. Reforms of this scale are typically introduced through government legislation, with Cabinet review, intergovernmental consultation, and analysis of administrative feasibility. Introducing structural governance change outside those pathways raises questions regarding due process, transparency, and the drivers behind this proposal.

#### **III. Lack of Public or Municipal Mandate**

A foundational question must be asked:

If municipalities are not asking for this, and the public is not asking for this, then who is?

No municipality, professional regulatory body, local government association, affordable housing advocate, or community organization has requested the removal of municipal oversight or the outsourcing of public decision-making to private applicant-hired professionals. The only formally documented support comes from the Urban Development Institute (UDI) and the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade — entities representing the financial interests of the development sector. Legislation reshaping public governance should not be led by those who stand to benefit financially from reduced oversight.

#### **IV. Alignment with Lobby-Supported Legislative Direction**

Bill M-216 follows recent legislation that removed public hearing requirements, mandated provincial rezoning baselines, constrained municipal cost-recovery tools, shortened review timelines, and centralized development authority. Each of these measures aligns closely with the long-term lobbying objectives of the same industry organizations supporting this Bill. Bill M-

216 appears not as an isolated reform, but as the next step in a coordinated agenda that reduces local authority and expands private-sector influence over public decisions.

## **V. Conflict with the Community Charter**

The Community Charter clearly establishes municipalities as an order of government responsible for good government, stewardship of public assets, and ensuring the well-being of present and future communities. These duties require independent review, discretion, judgment, and accountability — all of which Bill M-216 restricts. If the Province intends to redefine municipal authority in British Columbia, such a shift must be undertaken transparently through amendments to the Community Charter, not through piecemeal legislation that erodes its application.

## **VI. Legal Concern: Authority Removed, Responsibility Retained**

Administrative law is clear: a public body cannot be held responsible for decisions it is prevented from making. Bill M-216 requires municipalities to accept private professional certifications as sufficient to satisfy regulatory obligations — yet leaves municipalities legally and financially responsible for emergency and fire response capacity, policing and enforcement, roads, water, sewer and stormwater servicing, transportation and emergency access planning, long-term maintenance, and climate resiliency. This creates an administratively unreasonable governance structure, amounting to improper delegation of public authority to private actors.

A municipality cannot be accountable for risks it is prohibited from evaluating.

## **VII. The Practical Gap: Who Is This Professional?**

Municipal review requires a team — planners, engineers, building officials, fire prevention staff, transportation analysts, environmental specialists, and asset managers. Bill M-216 assumes one registered professional is capable of performing all these functions. No such designation exists, no competency standard defines one, and no liability framework assigns accountability. If we would not permit one private professional to run a municipality, we should not legislate a system where one can overrule one.

## **VIII. A Pattern of Democratic Erosion**

This Bill continues a trend recognizable in governance research as democratic erosion — where the structures of public decision-making remain visible, but their authority is gradually transferred to private actors or centralized administrative bodies. Efficiency must not become a substitute for democracy.

## **IX. Legislative Timing and the Systematic Exclusion of Municipal Input**

UBCM exists to ensure municipalities can participate meaningfully in provincial legislative development. Its structured resolution system, requiring formal submissions by June 15 each year, ensures that local governments can collectively identify concerns, seek clarification, and propose alternatives.

However, recent housing-related legislation has been introduced and passed outside these engagement windows. In November 2023, three major housing bills were introduced between November 1 and 8 and received Royal Assent by November 30. Given the UBCM resolution cutoff months earlier, municipalities had no procedural avenue to collectively respond. The same pattern is repeated with Bill M-216: a significant restructuring of municipal governance introduced outside UBCM's consultative cycle and without any obligation for structured municipal engagement.

This pattern demonstrates not only a lack of consultation but the removal of the opportunity for consultation. Bypassing the formal system designed to give municipalities a voice is, in effect, bypassing municipalities themselves.

#### **X. The Core Public Interest Question: What Problem Are We Solving?**

Before proceeding, the province must clearly articulate the rationale behind this Bill:

- Is the objective simply to build more housing?
- Is the goal to build more affordable housing?
- Are we preserving existing affordability or replacing naturally affordable housing with higher-priced units?
- Are we still legislating based on outdated demand forecasts when thousands of new units remain unsold or unoccupied?
- Have projections been updated to reflect reduced foreign student enrolment, lower investor demand, and changing immigration policy?

Policy must reflect current data, not outdated assumptions or industry momentum.

This question is especially important because recent trends in British Columbia make one reality clear: increasing housing supply does not automatically mean improving housing affordability. Supply and affordability are often conflated, yet they are not interchangeable. New units entering the market frequently do so at price points far beyond the reach of ordinary working households. If older, naturally affordable rental housing is demolished or redeveloped and replaced with higher-priced units, then the net effect is increased housing supply without increased affordability. In that scenario, the system produces more housing, yet makes cities less affordable.

Vacancy rates, income-to-shelter-cost ratios, and cost-of-living pressures across BC demonstrate that supply growth alone does not correct price volatility or speculation-driven value structures. Without alignment between construction and local wages, additional supply risks reinforcing market pressures rather than relieving them.

Simply put: more units do not guarantee more affordability.

#### **XI. Looking Ahead: Remaining Lobby Priorities**

UDI's remaining lobbying priorities — not yet realized in legislation — provide insight into what future bills may seek to accomplish. These include tying transit and infrastructure funding to

municipal compliance with housing targets, reducing or capping Development Cost Charges and Amenity Contributions, further shortening or eliminating public participation mechanisms, establishing provincial oversight positions empowered to intervene in municipal approvals, expanding blanket upzoning areas beyond those already mandated, and redefining affordable housing in ways that allow market-priced units to qualify. Municipalities must therefore anticipate continued attempts to reduce local autonomy, oversight capacity, and democratic accountability.

## **XII. Growth and Taxation Evidence**

Across British Columbia, a clear pattern has emerged: the fastest-growing municipalities are experiencing some of the highest increases in taxation. This trend reflects a simple reality — growth demands immediate investment in infrastructure and public services, while revenue from development arrives slowly, unevenly, or in constrained forms when cost-recovery tools are limited. This pattern is visible across the West Shore, Surrey, Kelowna, Sooke, and other rapidly expanding communities.

Growth does not pay for growth under the current model — existing taxpayers do.

Removing municipal authority while increasing growth pressure exacerbates this imbalance.

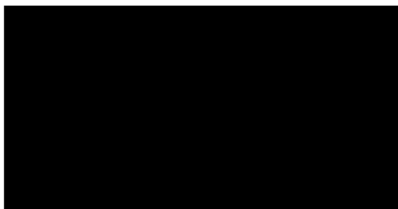
## **XIII. Final Reflection**

British Columbians expect decisions affecting their communities, safety, infrastructure, and future to be made by accountable democratic institutions — not delegated to private consultants. If the sponsoring MLA's genuine objective is to strengthen democracy, uphold the responsibilities of the Community Charter, and preserve the integrity of public governance in British Columbia, then the responsible action is clear:

Bill M-216 should be withdrawn.

Withdrawal would not end the conversation — it would place it back on the proper foundation: evidence, transparency, consultation, and alignment with the public interest.

Respectfully submitted,



**Mayor Sid Tobias**  
Town of View Royal



The Corporation of the  
District of Central Saanich

November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Honourable David Eby**

Premier of British Columbia

**Honourable Christine Boyle**

Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs

**Honourable Lana Popham**

Member of the Legislative Assembly, Saanich South

**Honourable Rob Botterell**

Member of the Legislative Assembly, Saanich North & the Islands

**Subject: Bill M216 *Professional Reliance Act* – District of Central Saanich Comments**

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On behalf of the District of Central Saanich, following a motion passed by Council on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025, I am writing to express our strong opposition to Bill M216, the *Professional Reliance Act*. While we recognize the Province's commitment to addressing housing supply challenges, this legislation represents a significant overreach into municipal jurisdiction and undermines the democratic principles that guide local governance.

It appears to us that Bill M216 would erode the decision-making authority of locally elected councils, who are directly accountable to their communities and best positioned to address local needs. It also threatens to bypass the professional expertise of municipal planners and staff, whose knowledge of local context is essential for responsible and sustainable development.

Central Saanich has already met both provincially mandated and locally established housing targets, demonstrating that municipalities can effectively deliver housing solutions without sweeping provincial intervention. A one-size-fits-all approach disregards community diversity and penalizes municipalities that have acted responsibly.

Further, Bill M216 introduces risks to public interest by limiting municipal oversight of technical submissions and creating uncertainty through a dispute resolution process that relies on the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance—an entity without the mandate or capacity to adjudicate local planning matters.

We urge the Province to pause Bill M216 and engage in meaningful consultation with local governments and professional organizations before proceeding. Respecting municipal authority and democratic processes is critical to achieving housing goals while safeguarding public trust.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working collaboratively to advance housing solutions that respect local autonomy.

Sincerely,



Mayor Ryan Windsor

cc: Christine Culham, Chief Administrative Officer  
Jarret Matanowitsch, Director of Planning, Building and Bylaw Services  
BC Municipalities & Regional Districts


November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025

At the November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Regular Council Meeting, the following resolution was adopted by Council:

**Resolution #2025-175**

*THAT the Village of Radium Hot Springs Council resolve to oppose the provincial draft Professional Reliance Act bill (M216).*

Certified a true copy of Resolution #2025-175 this 25<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2025.



Jill Logan  
Corporate Officer  
Village of Radium Hot Springs

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Meeting Type and Date:	Regular Council Meeting – November 24, 2025
Written by:	Adrian Bergles, CAO
Reviewed and Approved by CAO:	N/A
Subject:	Suggested Village of Radium Hot Springs opposition to draft <i>Professional Reliance Act</i> bill (M216) and consultation period response
Recommendation:	That the Village of Radium Hot Springs Council resolve to oppose the provincial draft <i>Professional Reliance Act</i> bill (M216)

Request for Decision ☒

Department Report ☐

Information Report ☐

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Implications of Recommendation:

Asset Management: Y  
Financial: Y  
OCP: Y  
Policy: Y  
Strategic Plan: Y

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SUMMARY INFORMATION

Recently the provincial NDP government has tabled a draft *Professional Reliance Act* bill (M216).

The draft legislation, which has received two readings and is open for public comment is intended to streamline development approvals in BC. Fundamentally it would end municipalities' – like the Village of Radium Hot Springs – ability to have planning documents prepared by licensed professionals undergo third party, peer review, which is fundamental to current processes.

This is seen as a method of speeding up development approvals, but it may have the opposite effect.

Groups like the Union of BC Municipalities, the Planning Institute of BC, and other professional organizations are either coming out in opposition to this proposed legislation, or are stating serious concerns with it.

Some of those concerns are:

- Deregulation of local government approvals via inability to provide peer review which routinely identifies deficiencies, leaving municipalities and taxpayers potentially on the hook to pay for reconstruction of something that could have been easily caught
- Slowing of development approvals, and introduction of uncertainties, as any deficiencies noted would have to be reported to the Office of the Superintendent for Professional Guidance
- Lack of innovation – local governments are currently empowered to employ professional reliance in instances that support community goals
- Creation of the draft bill in a vacuum – the bill lacks real-world ground truthing and nuance, unintended consequences are likely
- Part of a broader pattern of provincial overreach, building on provincial housing legislation that removes planning approval from municipalities
- Institutionalizing conflict of interest by which professionals hired by developers approve the projects by which they earn their income
- Erosion of municipal self-determination
- Centralization without affordability – removal of democratic checks does not guarantee affordability. On the contrary, it risks handing over unprecedented control to private actors and provincially appointed officials
- Inconsistency with professional programs already being implemented by local governments to streamline development processes
- The scope of bill (M216) is unnecessarily broad

At the very least, many of these groups request that the public comment period be extended beyond the beginning of December.

This is a significant piece of draft legislation, with far reaching and likely unintended consequences, some of which are likely to be negative.

Staff of the Village of Radium Hot Springs asks Council to consider the resolution to oppose this legislation. If this resolution is adopted, staff will forward this information and a corresponding letter to the provincial consultation portal which has been created to receive comments on the draft legislation.

**Options for Council:**

- 1) Adopt the resolution as presented (recommended)
- 2) Suggest changes to the resolution
- 3) Table and do not adopt the resolution

Respectfully submitted:

Adrian Bergles,

Chief Administrative Officer

December 3, 2025

Via email: [HMA.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:HMA.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

The Honourable Christine Boyle  
Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

**Re: Bill M 216 – 2025 Professional Reliance Act**

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Dear Minister Boyle;

I am writing to reinforce concerns other municipalities have raised about Bill M 216 – 2025 *Professional Reliance Act*, and to add additional ones that are contextual to rural and northern communities.

Allow me to express our ongoing support for the Province of B.C.'s efforts to modernize legislation that facilitates the timely development of housing in communities throughout British Columbia. The City of Quesnel has been a proactive collaborator to enable new housing development to occur throughout the city. In addition to the timely completion of our Housing Needs Assessment, the City was also the first municipality in the province to adopt policy to enable the construction of accessory dwelling units, including making available design plans, and has effectively utilized its Revitalization Tax Exemption bylaw and accessed Northern Development Initiative Trust's Northern Housing Incentive to spur the development of new units in the City.

Additionally, we want to thank the Province of B.C. for its continued partnership and investment in Quesnel, whether it be through Providence Living's proposed 288-bed long term care facility for West Quesnel, or support through BC Housing for women's transition housing, supportive housing at the Grace Inn site and shelter space. These investments are making a meaningful difference in our community.

Regarding Bill M 216 – 2025, our concerns fit within several broad categories as outlined below.

#### **Misunderstanding of Municipal Review**

There appears to be confusion in the province's supporting documents between the proposed Professional Reliance Act, the Certified Professional Program and the common practice of professional reliance.

To a large extent, smaller municipalities already rely on professionals as we do not complete a detailed review of an engineer's plans due to the lack of internal capacity. As such, municipal staff conduct only a high-level review that notes such things as whether a professional's plans meet the municipality's bylaw requirements, whether there is planned use of infrastructure materials the city does not prefer or if there is insufficient information or a lack of important



local information, among other things. It needs to be emphasized that these actions on the part of the municipality do not constitute a detailed technical review.

The Certified Professional Program refers to additional training professionals must obtain to ensure they are competent in the BC Building Code and can replace the building permit process under the Authority Having Jurisdiction. There is a significant lack of these certified professionals available in the north. The supporting documentation for the Bill lists the City of Prince George as a user of the Certified Professional Program. As far as we are aware, Prince George does not currently use this program and does not seem to be listed as a municipality under this program with the Architecture Institute of British Columbia, although it likely applies a high level of professional reliance.

### **Liability**

It remains unclear at this time how the language within the Bill would limit or eliminate municipal liability. For example, if a professional organization ceases to operate, where would the liability for their decisions rest? As it is, municipalities are generally named as co-defendants in legal actions regarding liability. As it is, professional reports always contain a section that limits their own liability while still providing approvals, which necessitates an additional effort on the part of the municipality to ensure the organization does not completely erase accountability for its own work and approvals.

### **Limited Access to Professionals in the North**

Quesnel, similar many other rural and remote municipalities, is experiencing an ongoing shortage of professionals located in or who are familiar with the community and its climate. We tend to see many professionals who provide reviews, approvals and reports in the community without ever being on site.

Related, this Bill would place additional pressure on professionals to take on competencies for which they do not have a scope of practice, which would necessitate further investment by the province in independent, professional regulatory oversight beyond what municipalities already do, which would result in additional costs, time and confusion.

Also, our experience has been that the quality of reports varies widely between professionals. Should this legislation proceed, we would urge the province to define the specific types of reports required for various levels of assurance. For example, the City was recently provided a technical memorandum instead of a geotechnical report for development – these are not the same and should not be relied upon as such to inform investment decisions.

An example of concern to our community is the West Quesnel Land Stability Area. In the past, municipal staff have engaged with several professionals willing to provide approved reports to support development in that area, which is fundamentally unsafe, and their reports frequently contain errors and omissions that would place undue burden on local taxpayers if the city were no longer able to intervene in the development process.



### **Infrastructure**

The language the province has provided to support the Bill is not clear on how these changes would impact municipal discretion regarding infrastructure the municipality will or may eventually own, nor is it clear how professionals will review their reports with consideration to the municipality's growth and development goals, many of which are regulatory requirements set out by the province.

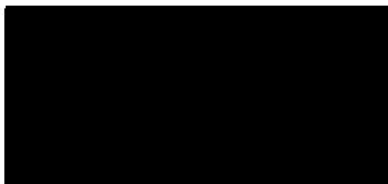
### **Conclusion**

Finally, we are concerned that the use of registered professionals hired and paid for by a development applicant and working on their behalf creates a serious conflict of interest. While professional reliance can be a useful tool, we would remind you of the lessons learned in B.C.'s forestry sector that ultimately led to that structure being repealed to reinforce sustainable management of B.C.'s crown timber resources.

While we appreciate the haste with which the province wishes to move, notably in urban areas, we advise you to apply patience and due diligence when making changes that largely affect another order of government. The City of Quesnel was unaware of the Bill's introduction and has not had meaningful discussions with your ministry regarding it. At the same time, the market for multi-family developments, notably in urban areas, has softened, which suggests other more fundamental economic issues that need to be resolved to spur development, which should take priority over this bill.

We expect respectful treatment from the province regarding legislative changes that fit entirely within the scope of local government. We encourage you to engage with municipalities to create a more meaningful change that achieves provincial goals while safeguarding the liability placed upon local taxpayers.

Thank you for your time.



Mayor Ron Paull  
City of Quesnel

Cc:

MLA Sheldon Clare  
Cori Ramsay, President, Union of B.C. Municipalities  
BC Municipalities

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**Municipal Insurance  
Association of British Columbia**

200 - 429 West 2nd Ave.  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1E3  
Toll-Free: 1-855-683-6266  
E-mail: [AskUsAnything@miabc.org](mailto:AskUsAnything@miabc.org)

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**[miabc.org](http://miabc.org)**

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November 27, 2025

The Honourable David Eby

The Honourable Christine Boyle, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs

MLA George Anderson

Amna Shah, Chair, Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills

Trevor Halford, Deputy Chair, Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills

Dear Premier Eby, Minister Boyle, Mr. Anderson, Ms. Shah, and Mr. Halford:

**Re: Feedback on Bill M 216 – 2025 Professional Reliance Act**

We write on behalf of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the Municipal Insurance Association of British Columbia (the "MIABC") in response to your invitation to provide feedback on Bill M 216 – 2025 Professional Reliance Act ("Bill M 216"). While the MIABC does not typically engage in lobbying on behalf of local governments, we do hold a unique vantage point from which we provide the following feedback. We insure 90% of the municipalities and regional districts in British Columbia, and we have extensive experience assessing how legislative changes affect local governments' civil liability, risk exposure, and insurance outcomes. It is in that context that we offer the following observations and concerns.

**Scope and Intent of the Bill**

Bill M 216 appears to pursue a narrow objective of reducing perceived duplication in local government oversight of new construction. Based on MLA Anderson's first reading remarks, the Bill aims to prevent local governments from conducting second reviews of submissions prepared by professionals regulated under the *Professional Governance Act*, SBC 2018, c. 47 ("PGA professionals"). The intended effect is to give precedence to PGA professionals' submissions over local government review.

However, Bill M 216 contains significant ambiguity. The legislation does not clearly define its scope, and the only direction provided relates to the definition of "submission." It is unclear whether Bill M 216 is intended to apply solely to development permits or also to building

permits. MLA Anderson's briefing materials suggest an intent to include building permit approvals, yet the statutory language does not make this explicit.

Local government review of new construction is discretionary. If a local government chooses to undertake a review, Bill M 216 would render that review largely meaningless. Under the Bill, a local government could only reject a certified submission by filing a complaint with the Superintendent of Professional Governance. This shifts local governments into an unsuitable role. They would be expected to act as *de facto* competency assessors of PGA professionals, despite not being mandated or equipped to carry out such a function.

### **Bylaw Compliance and Practical Consequences**

Section 2 of Bill M 216 requires that a local government must accept as meeting permit or bylaw requirements any submission certified by a PGA professional. This requirement assumes that PGA professionals possess detailed knowledge of the local bylaws that apply to land use and construction. Local government bylaws are complex, extensive, and unique to each jurisdiction. Proficiency in municipal bylaw interpretation is not a competency promoted or required under the *Professional Governance Act*.

A PGA professional working in a new jurisdiction will rarely be familiar with the full range of relevant bylaws. Many local governments have dozens of bylaws, each with provisions that affect land use, servicing, parking, subdivision, and building matters. Even experienced municipal staff require time and training to develop adequate bylaw fluency.

Local governments routinely receive submissions that are not fully compliant. Municipal approval is often an iterative process supported by pre-application meetings that reduce delays and improve the quality of submissions. If Bill M 216 prevents local governments from rejecting non-compliant plans at the permit stage, the consequence will be the construction of buildings and infrastructure that do not comply with municipal bylaws.

The implications of the above noted issues are substantial. If a building official identifies non-compliant elements in a certified set of plans, Bill M 216 would prevent the municipality from refusing the permit. Months later, during final inspection, the building official must reject the completed work if it violates bylaw requirements. The builder would then face significant costs to remove and redo the work which costs could have been avoided had the initial review been allowed to proceed as intended.

## Peer Reviews and Public Safety

It is also important to address the matter of peer reviews. It is rare for a local government to request a peer review based solely on submissions from an engineer. In our experience, peer reviews are almost always mandated only when a project has gone seriously off-track during construction and significant public safety concerns have emerged. Two of the largest claims ever handled by the MIABC involved construction based on designs of PGA professionals which led to disastrous stability issues. In both cases, the local government required a peer review to restore confidence from a life and safety perspective. One claim resulted in several property owners being required to abandon their one-million-dollar homes. The other resulted in the abandonment and projected demolition of a recently constructed social housing building that had been home to many vulnerable residents.

In our experience, local governments do not order a peer review in the absence of clear and serious safety concerns. A mandated peer review is a significant and unusual step that local governments do not take lightly. It is typically taken only after the local government has obtained legal advice. We also cannot recall a situation where a mandated peer review did not result in significant changes to the project design.

We agree that any order for a peer review should be accompanied by a report to the superintendent appointed under the *Professional Governance Act*. However, neither the public nor the developer is well served by delaying the peer review until after the superintendent has completed a review and made a determination. Local governments need the ability to require a peer review promptly when safety issues surface, to protect residents, mitigate risk, and prevent further harm.

## Civil Liability and Insurance Considerations

Section 8 of Bill M 216 appears to limit local government liability, but the protection is narrow and ambiguous. British Columbia courts have consistently expanded local governments' duties and standards of care in matters relating to building safety, inspections, and approvals. It is unclear whether section 8 would apply to duties to warn, to building inspections, or to other operational decisions. This ambiguity leaves room for litigation to proceed in circumstances the legislature may not have intended.

Shifting liability to PGA professionals offers limited protection for additional reasons. Most carry modest limits of liability insurance written on a "claims made" basis. This type of policy provides coverage only if the professional has an active policy when the claim is discovered and reported, which could be many years after the error was made. This structure differs from

“occurrence based” insurance, which responds as long as the policy was in place at the time the work was performed. Claims made coverage is significantly more restrictive for long-tail risks such as construction defects. Many building deficiencies, especially those involving foundations, structural elements, or building envelopes, develop slowly and may not become evident for five, ten, or even fifteen years.

By the time the defect becomes known, several things may have occurred. The professional may have changed insurers, reduced the scope of their insurance, retired or left practice, or allowed their coverage to lapse entirely. They may no longer carry insurance at all. Even if they remain insured, the policy terms might not respond to a claim arising from work completed many years earlier. Once the insurance has lapsed or changed, the original project is no longer protected.

In these situations, injured parties will often seek recovery from local governments, which are viewed by courts as stable, well-resourced defendants with ongoing duties related to building safety. Given the ambiguity in section 8, courts may be inclined to allow claims to proceed against local governments, especially where evidence shows the local government became aware of a deficiency but was prevented from acting by statute.

## Conclusion

Our overarching concern is that Bill M 216 restricts local governments from addressing bylaw compliance issues at the start of a project while leaving open the possibility of local government liability for deficiencies discovered after construction. Many of the bylaws at issue relate to life and safety matters. Following a serious incident, neither the courts nor the public will be comforted by an explanation that the local government knew of a deficiency but was prevented from acting by the proposed legislation.

We respectfully submit that Bill M 216 as currently drafted, is too broad, too vague, and too likely to create unintended consequences for builders, local governments, and the public they serve. We encourage further consultation with local governments, building officials, and professional regulatory bodies to ensure a legislative approach that reduces duplication while preserving essential safeguards.



Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We would be pleased to discuss these concerns further.

Sincerely,



**Stuart Horn**  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Municipal Insurance Association of British Columbia



**Megan Chorlton**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Municipal Insurance Association of British Columbia

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**From:** BC Rural Health Network <newsletter@bcruralhealth.org>  
**Sent:** December 1, 2025 7:50 AM  
**To:** District of 100 Mile  
**Subject:** Rural Health Matters December 2025 Edition



**BCRHN**  
**British Columbia**  
**Rural Health Network**

December 2025  
Edition

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## **A Letter from our President**

Dear Readers,

As we move into the holiday season, I want to extend warm greetings to all our members, partners, and communities across rural British Columbia. This time of year offers a moment to reflect on our collective work, the progress we've made, and the ongoing commitment to strengthening rural health.

Earlier this month, Paul and I had the opportunity to meet with Deanne Taylor, Executive Director for the [Jim Pattison Centre for Health System Learning + Innovation](#). "The Centre is the first of its kind in the region, a dedicated hub where health care providers, researchers, educators, and policymakers can collaborate to pilot new models of care, analyze data, share knowledge, and accelerate innovative ideas that improve patient outcomes across the Interior Health region and beyond."

The Centre for Innovation truly has synergy with the BC Rural Health Network (BCRHN), and we look forward to further discussions on how we can collaborate and support each other. This strengthening relationship holds particular promise for rural communities seeking practical, sustainable solutions to long-standing challenges.

I continue working with the Personal Health Record (PHR) team, including a recent presentation to the physician CPE group about the need for British Columbians to have access to all their health information. When individuals can view, understand, and discuss their records with their care teams, they become true partners in their own health care, leading to better outcomes, earlier.

A quick RTVS ([Real Time Virtual Support](#)) update is, that as mentioned last month, the Virtual Support programs of MaBAL (Maternity Support) and CHARLiE (Paediatric Support) continue to operate on a reduced schedule. They are providing support through the night. Negotiations continue and we are hoping that these much needed services will return to provide support 24 hours a day, every day.

Our Fundraising Committee continues to explore opportunities to provide consistent financial support for the Network. Stable funding is essential as we continue to bring the voice of rural to all provincial tables and advocate effectively for the communities of BC.

The Implementation Committee continues its impressive work on strengthening Primary Health Care across rural British Columbia. Their dedication, expertise, and collaborative approach are driving meaningful progress in the development of sustainable, community-aligned health system solutions. We were fortunate to receive an inspiring presentation from Chelsea Wozniak in on the remarkable work happening at the [Luther Court Community Health Centre](#). The [CHC model](#) continues to demonstrate how integrated, team-based care can transform patient experience and outcomes, particularly in underserved communities.

The BCRHN continues to be well represented at CARGA and at the provincial Primary Care Review. Ensuring rural perspectives are included in these key discussions remains central to our mission, and our involvement is making a significant contribution.

A reminder that our Annual Meeting will be held on December 17, and we warmly welcome all members to attend. Your participation and input are invaluable as we continue to strengthen our Network and advance rural health

Unfortunately I have reluctantly accepted the resignation of Leonard Casley. Leonard has been a member of the board for 5 plus years.. His willingness to share his knowledge with us especially in the area of Emergency Services , including Fire and Ambulance ,has provided valuable input into our board discussions. He shall be missed but will continue to be a part of our Network as a member.

Our Executive Director, Paul Adams, continues to be exceptional in building connections, providing media presence, and ensuring our voice is heard at every table he attends. His commitment to the Network, and the time he devotes to every facet of the organization, is deeply appreciated by myself and by all those involved in the BCRHN.

A thank you also to Dea, who works tirelessly to gather information, follow up on initiatives, and connect with communities. Her friendly and engaging personality helps everyone she interacts with feel comfortable, supported, and heard.

Many heartfelt thanks to our Board Members, Liaisons, and all our Members, who bring their knowledge, time, and dedication to the Network. Your commitment is the foundation of the BCRHN, and we could not do this work without you.



So with that I will sign off for now and from my home to yours I wish you a warm and joyful holiday season filled with health happiness and peace , and only the best in 2026!

Only my best,

Peggy

**Peggy Skelton**  
**President**

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*Save the date!*

# BC Rural Health Network

## 2025 AGM

We will be holding our Annual General Meeting on  
December 17th at 3:00 pm PST

Join us to hear from  
this year's guest  
speaker: **Emily Lowan,**  
**leader of the BC Green**  
**Party**

**Join the Network  
as a member!**

Our AGM is open to all of our  
members! If you are not currently a  
member but would like to attend the  
AGM, please register as a member  
prior to December 15th, 2025

Please reach out to us  
([info@bcruralhealth.org](mailto:info@bcruralhealth.org)) with any questions



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## **From the Desk of the Executive Director**

Dear Readers,

Over the past month, much of our work has centred on strengthening primary care in British Columbia and ensuring rural voices remain front and centre in ongoing system reform. The conversations, collaborations, and advocacy efforts that took place in November have reinforced how urgently rural access issues must be addressed and how important our collective work has become.

### **Primary Care Reform and the CARGA Process**

The CARGA Primary Care Review continues to evolve, with the Ministry now expected to release Report 2 in early December. Following concerns that the [first report](#) did not provide the necessary data to evaluate primary care performance across communities, many stakeholders have provided feedback to the MoH team and we hope the collective concerns of many will be addressed in the next report.

I have been delighted to be involved with a working group formed by MLA Botterell tasked to develop a [five-page proposal](#) outlining what effective primary care should look like in BC. The model emphasizes team-based care, community governance, accountability, and funding mechanisms aligned with real population needs. This proposal has been shared with the Minister directly and continues to guide our discussions with the Ministry. It is also acting as foundation to the development of the Network's internal position on Primary Care reform and the work being undertaken by our Implementation Committee.

We will keep the Network updated as Report 2 is released and as further opportunities for rural engagement emerge.

### **Implementation Committee Updates**

With Dr. Jude Kornelsen returning earlier this month, work on the Implementation Committee has gained renewed momentum. Planning is well underway for future sessions that will bring in speakers, researchers, and health system leaders to help us

refine our rural primary care position. These conversations continue to strengthen our understanding of what works, what doesn't, and where the greatest opportunities lie for meaningful change.

Our focus remains clear: ensure that rural lived experiences directly inform policy, design, and implementation of primary care services across the province.

### **Housing is Healthcare: Ongoing Engagement**

Beyond our previous updates, conversations with partners continue to underscore the importance of medical housing for rural residents who must travel for care. We remain engaged with several groups, including emerging projects in Vancouver, to explore models that could reduce barriers for patients facing high accommodation costs. This work remains a core advocacy priority for the Network.

### **Addressing Gaps in Neurodivergent Assessment Services**

Rural families continue to face significant delays and barriers in accessing neurodivergent assessments for children and adults. This month included several meetings with regional partners and health authorities to build a clearer understanding of available resources and the systemic gaps that persist.

A productive meeting with Northern Health leadership has led to a stronger commitment to ongoing dialogue, with future sessions being extended and more formally structured to advance collaborative solutions. In addition, new connections were made with the [Autism BC](#) leadership and [Jude's team at UBC](#) is embarking on a research project to further assess the gaps in care and assessment.

### **Transportation and Access to Care**

I was invited to participate in a provincial roundtable on improving transportation across BC. Initially focused on urban transit, the conversation has expanded to include the broader concept of public transportation and the essential role it plays in healthcare access for rural residents.

Our involvement is helping shift the perspective toward one that recognizes:

- the absence of basic inter-community routes,

- lack of public transportation options across rural BC,
- the significant cost burden placed on residents and the ongoing reliance on private vehicles for essential care,
- the lack of mobility options for seniors and people with disabilities, and
- the direct connection between transportation and equitable access to health services.

We will continue to advocate for transportation solutions that reflect rural realities.

### **Collaboration on Access to Care**

This month also highlighted a deeply concerning example of rural inequity: a North Island resident who declined treatment for macular degeneration due to travel and accommodation costs, resulting in preventable blindness. Yet another example of why travel assistance must be seen as a moral imperative and a cost saving measure and not an unattainable pipe dream. The cost of people unable to reach care in a timely fashion is costing people their health and wellbeing and causing massive long-term costs to the system.

We are working with [COSCO](#) to join voices and forces on advancing travel assistance and improving access to care.

### **New Partnerships and Community Connections**

Our work this month also included:

- collaboration with the [First Nations Health Foundation](#) on [Housing is Healthcare](#),
- engagement with [Community Living BC](#) to understand the access barriers faced by their rural clients, and
- the beginning of a new relationship with a Kelowna-based group [Jim Pattison Centre for Health System Learning + Innovation](#), exploring community-driven health innovation.

These connections are expanding our ability to build solutions that reflect rural needs and create new opportunities for partnership across the province.

We hope we will see many of our readers join our Network and invite all members to join us for our AGM on December 17th at 3pm PST, for additional information please contact us at [info@bcruralhealth.org](mailto:info@bcruralhealth.org).

I wish everyone a wonderful holiday season!

Yours in health and wellness,  
Paul

**Paul Adams**

Executive Director

BC Rural Health Network

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## Community Connect

Hello everyone,

I truly hope this message finds you in good spirits. I can hardly believe that after this month, we'll be stepping into a brand-new year. It feels surreal, but also exciting, knowing how much possibility is waiting just around the corner.

As I think back on the year, my heart keeps returning to the many moments we shared across our rural and remote communities. Each visit, each conversation, each story reminded me of the strength, warmth, and deep sense of connection that make our communities so special.

This year, so many of you shared your stories of overcoming challenges, supporting neighbors, finding strength in tradition, and creating new ideas rooted in the land and people you know so well. These stories matter. They help us understand the realities of rural living, the resourcefulness it requires, and the opportunities that grow when community voices lead the way.



Through open discussions and shared experiences, we explored ideas that have the power to shape real change, not just in programs or policies, but in the everyday lives of families, elders, youth, and local leaders. Whether it was talking about access to services, celebrating local successes, or imagining new ways to support each other, each idea collected throughout the year came from a place of honesty, hope, and lived experience.

I'm deeply grateful to everyone who welcomed me into their spaces, shared their perspectives, and helped build conversations that truly reflect the needs and strengths of rural and remote communities. Your insight continues to guide our efforts and ensures that our outreach at the BC Rural Health Network isn't just meaningful, it's relevant, respectful, and community driven.

As we look ahead, I'm excited to continue walking alongside you, amplifying local voices, and working together toward solutions that honor the uniqueness of every community we visit. There are more stories to hear, more ideas to grow, and more opportunities to create positive, lasting change.

Thank you for your warmth, your honesty, and your partnership throughout the year. Wishing you a peaceful end to the year and a hopeful, inspired beginning to the next. If you are interested in sharing ideas or lived experiences, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Kind regards

Dea

[dea.lewsaw@bcruralhealth.org](mailto:dea.lewsaw@bcruralhealth.org)

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## **December Member of the Month: Options for Sexual Health**



Options for Sexual Health brings trusted, non-judgmental sexual and reproductive health care to communities throughout British Columbia. As we continue to see changes to the landscape of health care, Options continues to find ways to support the sexual and reproductive health care of people in BC. Last year, Options for Sexual Health faced a significant funding challenge, and they heard from many of their patients and clients about the impact Options has, not only in their communities, but also on their lives.

For Options, it's important to not only be in big cities but also to meet the needs of people in rural and remote areas of the province where services are limited. For many people living outside major centres there can be a lack of local capacity, which creates real barriers to getting timely, confidential care. Options aims to reduce those barriers with a combination of clinical services, education, the Sex Sense phone & email resource, and an active Community Engagement team, all designed to meet people where they are.

Options understands that distance and limited services aren't the only challenges rural residents face: smaller, close-knit communities may also amplify stigma, preventing people from seeking health care services, and local providers may lack specialized sexual health training. Options' multi-pronged model addresses these layers by delivering direct clinical care, offering trusted remote advice through Sex Sense, building local skills through education, and creating ongoing community relationships through engagement work. The result is a more resilient local system where people can access care safely, confidentially and with dignity.



Clinical care that fits local needs Options provides clinical care in a way that most other health care providers can't, especially in rural and remote communities. Options directly manages 33 clinics and partners with an additional 15 clinics to provide accessible and specialized sexual and reproductive clinical care. Clients can access sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment, contraception and contraceptive counselling, cervical screening, pregnancy options information, and confidential follow-up care. Clinics aim to be inclusive and affirming for people of all ages, genders, sexual orientations and cultural backgrounds.

Education that builds local capacity Prevention and health literacy are core to Options' work. Their education program delivers age-appropriate, evidence-based sexual health workshops in schools, for parent groups, and for professionals and service providers. In smaller communities this could be training for local health professionals, teachers, and youth workers so they have the confidence and tools to support their community. The program also works with Indigenous partners and culturally specific organizations to adapt the learnings and resources so they're respectful, relevant, and effective. By strengthening local knowledge, Options helps communities keep more of their care close to home.

Sex Sense: confidential information by phone and email Options for Sexual Health recognizes that not everyone is able to (or wants to!) get in-person care right away. Sex Sense, Options' phone and email resource, provides a low-barrier way to get accurate, confidential answers to questions about contraception, STIs, consent, sexual orientation, gender identity, and more. The staff who answer Sex Sense are trained to be non-judgmental, trauma-informed, and practical: they explain options, help people figure out next steps, and connect callers or emailers with local services when clinical care is needed, which can also help ease the burden on local health care like family physicians, walk in clinics, and emergency rooms. For someone in a small

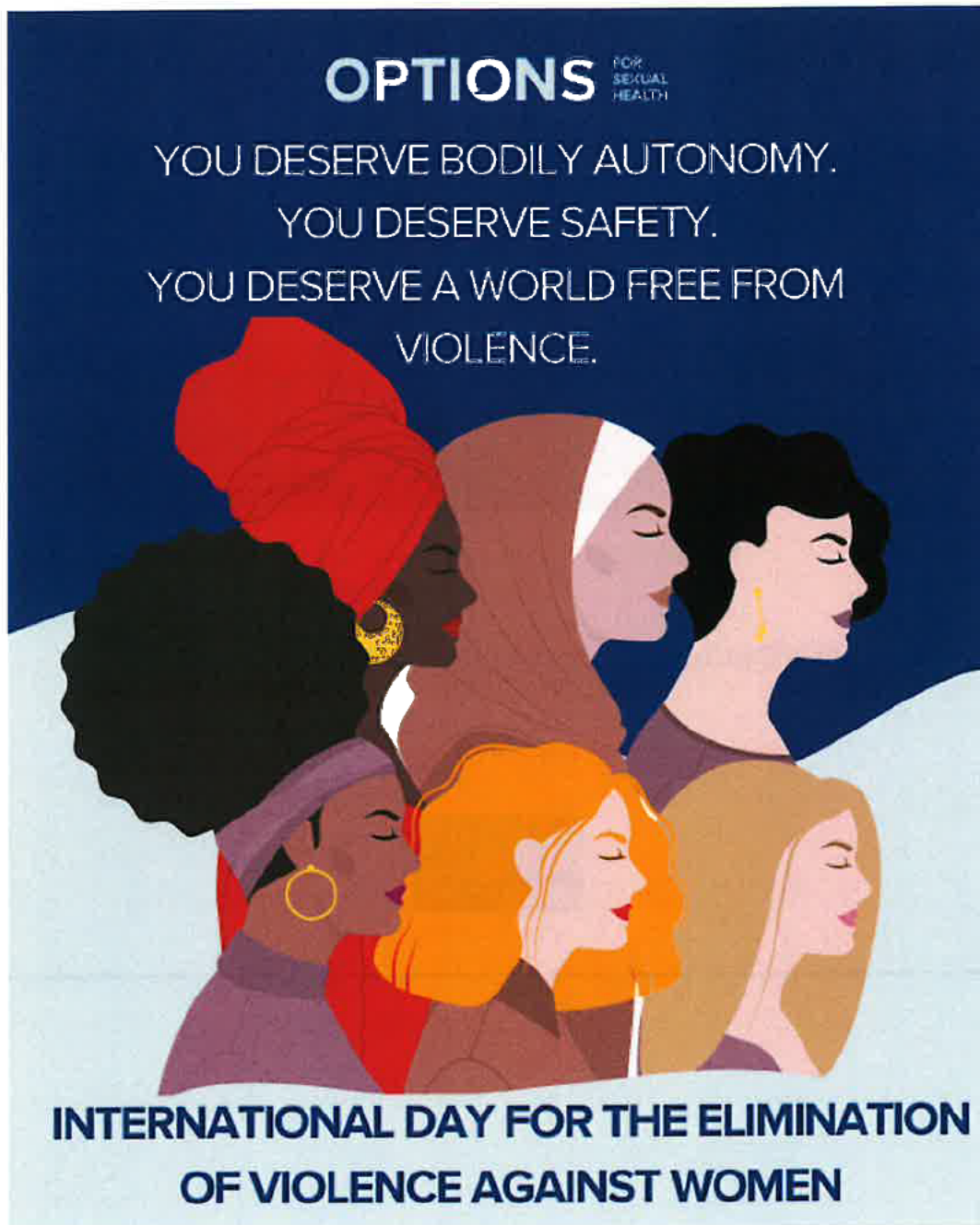
town who may not be able to immediately access a clinic or clinician, Sex Sense offers immediate and reliable guidance — and when follow-up is necessary, the team can help connect people with resources to book appointments or referrals that respect the situation. If you or someone you know needs confidential advice, information, or an appointment Options' Sex Sense phone and email service is a helpful first step. Open Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., they're ready to help with your sexual health questions and concerns!



**Community Engagement:** outreach, partnerships and presence Options' Community Engagement team is what turns policy and programs into real reach on the ground. That team builds partnerships with rural health centres, Indigenous health providers, schools, and social service agencies to design services that fit local realities. Community Engagement coordinates outreach events, pop-up clinics, and health promotion at markets, fairs, and other local events to not only provide access to information and resources, but also to help normalize sexual health as part of everyday community life rather than something to be hidden. The Options for Sexual Health website and social media channels are also a great resource for people looking for more information, with a low barrier access point for everyone!

**Reaching farther: telehealth and flexible delivery** Options also recognizes that sometimes it is just not possible to access a clinic in person, whether due to geography, work, school, or just otherwise busy lives! To accommodate this, Options now has a telehealth service. Telehealth consultations allow clinicians to provide care and follow up without forcing long trips. These flexible delivery models are designed to work around rural realities and reduce the distance between a person and the care they need. When local capacity is limited, Options also focuses on building partnerships in local communities and finding the best resources available for you. **How To Find Options** Whether you live in a city, a small town, or a remote community, Options for Sexual Health aims to reduce barriers to care to be there for you! · To find a clinic in your area visit the Clinic Finder on Options' website. · To

access Sex Sense, visit [SexSense.org](https://SexSense.org) or call 1-800-739-7367 Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.



By combining clinical services, education, confidential telephone and email support, and dedicated community outreach, Options for Sexual Health helps ensure geography doesn't determine who can get quality sexual and reproductive health care.

Options for Sexual Health is a registered non-profit and charity. In order to continue to provide these services and more, they do rely on the generosity of people like you! If you'd like to support the work Options is doing, please consider becoming a donor, and help to ensure their services remain in the rural and remote communities of BC. Thank you!



[Visit Options for Sexual Health Webpage Here](#)

[See more members of the month here](#)

View

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**RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY**

**HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF YOUTH SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES IN BC!**

**UBC's Sexual Health Evaluation Team** and **Options for Sexual Health** have partnered to evaluate youth sexual health service gaps and inform the design of strengthened youth sexual health services in BC, with priority focus on providers and youth living and working in smaller urban, rural and remote communities in BC.

Options for Sexual Health currently operates 30 clinics across BC. As of early 2025, Options has bridge funding for the year from the BC Ministry of Health while it undergoes strategic planning to inform more sustainable sexual and reproductive health service delivery in BC.

**This is a chance for rural and remote youth and providers in BC to share directly how they want to access/offer youth sexual health services in their community & shape the design of what strengthened, youth-centred, local sexual health services could look like!**

We are currently interviewing:

- Youth ages 15-29 years old (all genders)
- Sexual health providers - including nurses, doctors, pharmacists, midwives, counsellors, sexual health educators, and support workers

Participants' stories, experiences accessing and providing care, and ideas for the future of these services in the province will be shared in a report with Options for Sexual Health, the Ministry of Health, program planners, and service providers to shape the design of youth sexual and reproductive health services in BC.

Interviews take ~1-hour, can be completed over Zoom, and are compensated with a \$50 honouraria to thank you for sharing your time and expertise.

Principal Investigators: Dr. Kate Shannon (UBC Professor, Social Medicine & Policy), Tiffany Melius (Executive Director, Options for Sexual Health), Nicole Pasquino (Clinical Practice Director, Options)

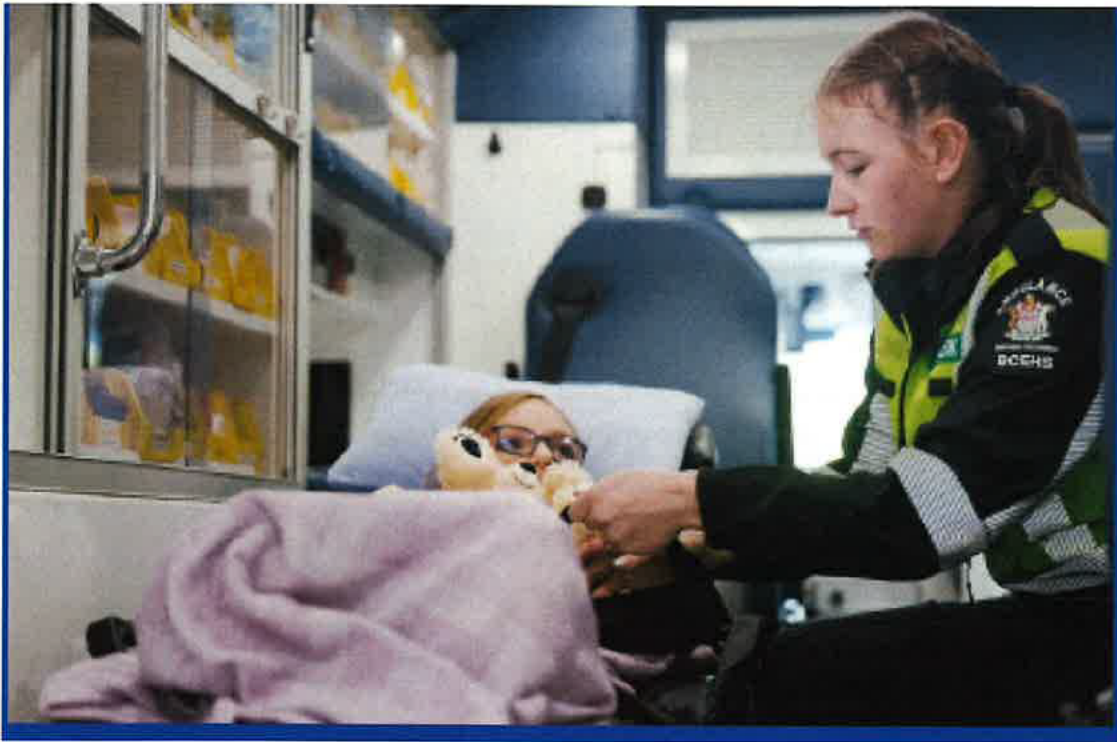
**Contact the Project Lead, Rachel Bergen, if interested:**

Email: [rachel.bergen@ubc.ca](mailto:rachel.bergen@ubc.ca)

Website: [bc-sexualhealthevaluation.ca](http://bc-sexualhealthevaluation.ca)



## A Career in Saving Lives: BCEHS Youth Pathways Program Opens Doors for Future Paramedics



British Columbia's rural communities need more paramedics, and the BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) Youth Pathways Program is stepping up to inspire the next generation of emergency responders. If you've ever wondered what it's like to be on the frontlines of healthcare, responding to crises, and making a real difference in people's lives, this program is your chance to find out.

**From interactive simulations to hands-on ride-along experiences, BCEHS is offering a structured pathway for students from Grade 9 to 12, and even young adults, to explore the world of paramedicine. An Opportunity for Rural Youth to Step into the Action**

BCEHS is actively reaching out to rural youth, encouraging them to consider a career in emergency health services. With an increasing demand for paramedics across BC's remote and underserved regions, this program provides a unique opportunity for students to gain real-world experience and fast-track their careers in healthcare.

Here's how students can get involved:

- **Grade 9: A Day in the Life of a Paramedic** – Get a firsthand look at what it takes to be a paramedic through interactive simulations, first aid training, and Q&A sessions with professionals.
- **Grade 10: Paramedic Youth Camp** – A 2-day immersive camp where students develop teamwork, leadership, and life-saving skills that will enhance their resumes.
- **Grades 11 & 12: High School EMR Course** – A post-secondary Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) course delivered at the high school level, preparing students for entry-level roles in emergency medicine.
- **Youth Observer Program (Ages 17-18)** – Experience the adrenaline rush of emergency response through ride-along shifts, mentorship from paramedics, and hands-on medical training.

## Why This Matters for Rural Communities

Many rural areas across BC face critical shortages of paramedics, leading to long wait times and increased pressure on emergency services. By encouraging young people to explore this career path early, BCEHS is helping to build a strong, local workforce that can serve their own communities.

For rural students who may not have considered a future in healthcare, this program provides an accessible and exciting introduction to emergency medicine, without having to leave their home communities to get started.

## How to Get Involved

If you, or someone you know, are interested in a future as a paramedic, now is the time to explore the BCEHS Youth Pathways Program. The program is school-sponsored and offers life-changing experiences that could set students on the path to a rewarding and impactful career.

[Brochure BCEHS Youth Pathways Program](#) [Download](#)

For more information, visit [BCEHS Youth Pathways Program](#) or contact **Deborah Roberts at (250) 731-7197** or [Deborah.roberts@bcehs.ca](mailto:Deborah.roberts@bcehs.ca).

Take the first step toward a career that saves lives, because the future of emergency health services in BC starts with you. 🇨🇦 ❤️



**KEEPING OUR FINGERS  
ON THE PULSE OF  
BC RURAL HEALTH  
ISSUES**



[Travel and Access to Care  
in Rural and Remote B.C. –  
BC Rural Health Network  
Position Paper](#)

Click here

[Housing is Healthcare](#)

Click here

[Strengthening Primary  
Care in BC: Building on a  
Shared Model for Change](#)

Click here

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## **Oncology Travel and Supports**

If you are an oncology patient or know someone in BC who is, Canadian Cancer Society and Hope Air offer amazing services and supports. Please visit their websites to learn more.



**Canadian  
Cancer  
Society**

- No one should have to miss their cancer treatment because they can't find transportation or accommodation, but unfortunately that's a reality that exists in areas across the country today, particularly in rural communities.
- Thanks to this generous funding from the BC Government, we will be able to continue reducing the financial burden and improving outcomes for British Columbians going through life-saving cancer treatment, no matter where in the province they live.
- The investment has allowed CCS to expand the Cancer Travel and Accommodation Services program (CTAAS) to more communities across the province.
- Launched in 2023, this life-changing program has supported over 3,000 British Columbians through the end of 2024, allowing them to focus on their treatment and making travel costs one less thing to worry about.

CCS continues to support people with cancer through:

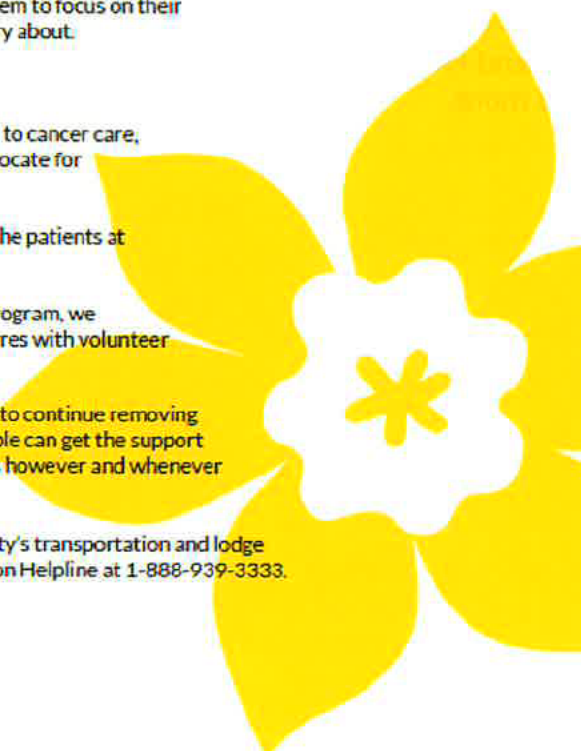
**Financial assistance:** Grants for travel expenses related to cancer care, including for those who need to travel or temporarily relocate for leukemia/bone marrow transplant

**Accommodations:** Free lodging and meals at no cost to the patients at one of our CCS lodges near treatment centres

**Ground transportation:** Through our Wheels of Hope program, we connect patients needing transportation to medical centres with volunteer drivers

We are also working in close partnership with Hope Air to continue removing barriers in accessing travel services by air, ensuring people can get the support they need to get to and from their medical appointments however and whenever they need.

- To learn more about the Canadian Cancer Society's transportation and lodge services, visit [cancer.ca](https://cancer.ca) or contact the Cancer Information Helpline at 1-888-939-3333.



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## **Travel Assistance with Kindness and Compassion!**

BOARDING PASS



**Passenger:**  
Atticus, 5 years old

**Reason for travel:**  
Battling neuromuscular disease

**Travel route:**  
Kelowna to Vancouver

**Started travelling with Hope Air:**  
2022

**Number of trips:**  
5 lifetime trips

**We look forward to connecting with you.**



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