

**DISTRICT OF 100 MILE HOUSE****FOR INFORMATION CORRESPONDENCE – January 13th, 2026**

- Correspondence from Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre
 - RE: Support for Community Based Counselling Services and Funding Request
- Correspondence from Mr. Yeung
 - RE: Evergreen Crescent condition
- Correspondence from City of Quesnel
 - RE: Railway Engagement and Assessment Support
- Correspondence from District of Metchosin, Village of Greenwood, Town of Osoyoos, City of Williams Lake, Town of View Royal, City of Parksville
 - RE: Bill M216- 2025 Professional Reliance Act
- Correspondence from Parkside Art Gallery
 - Window Repairs
- Correspondence from City of Williams Lake
 - Cariboo Chilcotin Business Resilience and Diversification Initiative
- Correspondence from Rural Coordination Centre of BC
 - Community Resources Information
- BC Rural Health Network – Mid December & Year End Newsletter
- Communities in Bloom – December Newsletter



**CARIBOO FAMILY
ENRICHMENT CENTRE**
Strengthening the Quality of Personal, Family, and Community Life

Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre Society

December 15, 2025

Finance Minister Brenda Bailey, MLA Lorne Doerkson, MP Todd Doherty, Members of 100 Mile House District Council

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Support for Community-Based Counselling Services and Funding Request

We are writing as Board Directors of the Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre Society (CFEC), a community-based nonprofit organization that provides free and low-barrier counselling services in the South Cariboo region. Our services are accessed by families, individuals, youth, and caregivers who otherwise face significant barriers to mental health care. I am reaching out to request your support for the renewal and continued investment in the Community Action Initiative (CAI) Community Counselling Fund, which is currently ending in Spring 2026, and consists of \$130,000. This fund has been vital to our ability to meet the mental health needs of people across our service area.

CFEC has been serving families and individuals in the South Cariboo since its incorporation in 1988, offering a broad range of supports including counselling services, family services, youth programming, early years resources, and childcare resources. Our counselling program provides free individual, family, couple, and group counselling, addressing a wide range of non-clinical needs such as stress, mild depression, trauma, relationship concerns, goal-setting support, and more. Drop-in counselling is also available weekly for immediate, brief support and skill-building. These services are often the only accessible mental health supports for many in our rural region.

Community Counselling funding has enabled our organization to offer timely, trauma-informed, culturally responsive counselling services that reduce barriers such as cost, long waitlists, lack of extended benefit coverage, and geographic isolation. These supports have been critical for people who would otherwise be unable to access needed care.

Each year, our counselling program supports many people across the South Cariboo, offering individual and group sessions that help people build coping skills, strengthen relationships, manage life transitions, and maintain well-being in their homes and communities.

The need for these services continues to grow. In recent years, we have seen increased demand among families, youth, and individuals experiencing economic stress, social isolation, or mental health challenges. Provincial investment in community-based counselling has allowed us to respond early and prevent escalation to crisis, reducing pressure on hospitals and emergency services, and keeping people supported in their communities where they live and work.

As you and your colleagues consider budgetary priorities for the upcoming cycle, I respectfully ask that you advocate for:

1. **A full and timely renewal of the CAI Community Counselling Fund**, ensuring organizations like ours can continue offering services without disruption. In previous years, yearly renewals have been confirmed after project end

CARIBOO FAMILY ENRICHMENT CENTRE
P.O. Box 2427
#1-486 Birch Avenue
100 Mile House, BC, V0K 2E0



Phone: (250) 395-5155
Fax: (250) 395-1811
Email: cfec@cariboofamily.org
Web: www.cariboofamily.org

CFEC is located on the unceded traditional territory of the Tsq'escenemc, within Secwepemcúlcw.



dates, resulting in layoffs of skilled staff and interruptions in service delivery.

2. **Stable, multi-year funding**, allowing community agencies like ours to plan for long-term service delivery rather than navigate annual uncertainty.

Without renewed funding, CFEC (along with the 44 other organizations currently receiving this support) will be forced to significantly scale back services. This would directly impact the thousands of people who rely on low-barrier counselling to maintain their wellbeing, strengthen family stability, and stay connected to their communities.

The CAI Community Counselling Fund is a proven, cost-effective investment in prevention, wellness, and community resilience. Continued support for this initiative will ensure that British Columbians receive the right care at the right time, in the communities they call home.

Client & Organizational Impact – Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre Counselling Program

To date, counselling services were delivered to 136 individuals and families with another 59 attending group services at the Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre. Approximately 800 counselling sessions per year are delivered to people who come to us during periods of stress, transition, or uncertainty. Living in a rural region means many face barriers such as travel distance, limited income, and long waits or ineligibility for other mental health programs.

In the past year, we have seen a notable increase in demand for counselling services among older adults and individuals who are economically vulnerable, a trend we expect to accelerate in the coming months. The recent closure of the West Fraser Mill will have significant implications for the mental and social wellbeing of residents in the South Cariboo. Based on our experience following the closures of the Norbord and Chasm mills, as well as broader research on economic disruption, we anticipate a predictable pattern of increased need. In the immediate aftermath, we expect higher demand for individual counselling related to depression, anxiety, and substance use. This is typically followed by increased need for relationship and family counselling, including higher rates of family conflict and domestic violence, as financial stress and uncertainty take their toll. Youth are also deeply affected by these changes, and we anticipate a corresponding rise in demand for youth counselling as family instability increases.

These impacts will occur in a context where many community members will experience reduced incomes and loss of extended health benefits. Individuals who may previously have accessed private counselling will increasingly turn to free, community-based services such as those offered by CFEC. Early, accessible intervention is critical during these periods of transition. When people receive timely support, it reduces the likelihood that concerns escalate into crises requiring more intensive and more costly interventions through Interior Health or the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Sustained investment in community-based counselling ensures that our region can respond proactively to economic disruption while protecting the wellbeing of individuals, families, and the broader community.

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CARIBOO FAMILY ENRICHMENT CENTRE

Strengthening the Quality of Personal, Family, and Community Life

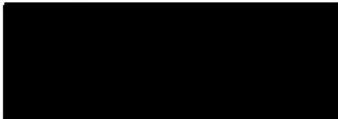
Having access to timely, trauma-informed, no-cost counselling close to home has allowed people to build coping skills, improve communication in their families, and feel more connected and supported within their community. Many share that these services helped them regain stability, confidence, and the ability to manage daily challenges, outcomes that would have been difficult to achieve without accessible, community-based supports.

For our organization, the Community Counselling Fund has been essential in maintaining and expanding our capacity to meet these needs. This funding enables us to offer free and low-barrier counselling and retain skilled counsellors who understand the unique realities of the South Cariboo.

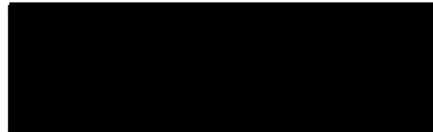
Without continued funding, we would be forced to scale back services significantly, which would directly affect the many residents who rely on CFEC as their primary source of mental health support. Stable, ongoing investment ensures that individuals and families in our region receive consistent, preventative, and community-rooted care that strengthens overall wellbeing.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to supporting mental health services across our province. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the impacts of this fund further or provide additional data from our organization.

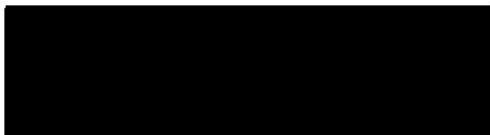
Sincerely,



Saturn Zezza
Board Co-Chairperson
Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre



Rob Diether
Board Co-Chairperson
Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre



Cindy Steven
Supervisor of Financial Services
Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre



Lorna Ross
Supervisor of Administration
Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: December 8, 2025 1:05 PM
To: District of 100 Mile
Subject: Evergreen Crescent

Hi,
Has anyone from the District took a tour down Evergreen Crescent to look at the state of disrepair it is in?
Curbs washing out, pavement cracking, potholes etc. Someone is going to get hurt.
While I understand District money is tight with the loss of tax revenue something should be done. The temporary repairs just pop out. At least top the existing pavement.

Thank you,
Paul Yeung

[REDACTED]

December 18, 2025

Via email: ben@northerndevelopment.bc.ca

Ben Campbell, CEO
Northern Development Initiative Trust
301 – 1268 Fifth Avenue,
Prince George, BC
V2L 3L2

**Re: Letter of Support - Prince George–North Vancouver Railway Engagement
and Assessment**

Dear Mr. Campbell;

At the December 16, 2025, Regular Meeting of Quesnel City Council, Council resolved:

J.2) Railroad from Prince George to North Vancouver - Mayor Paull to discuss

26-06-44 MOVED Councillor Vik, Seconded Councillor McKelvie and resolved:
THAT Council direct staff to prepare a letter to Northern Development
Initiative Trust in support of their granting the funding necessary to
conduct the study to save the Prince George to North Vancouver railroad.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Quesnel City Council supports the funding request to Northern Development Initiative Trust for the proposed assessment of the Prince George to North Vancouver rail corridor, including the section CN plans to return to BC Rail in July 2026.

This line from Vancouver to Prince George not only has benefits for freight, but also for passenger movement, taking into account the Rocky Mountaineer that stops overnight in Quesnel. The restoration of this rail line would enhance passenger travel, especially given the Rocky Mountaineer's existing overnight stop in Quesnel. Building on this established tourism connection, renewed rail service would improve mobility between communities, support local businesses that benefit from increased visitor traffic, and offer residents a reliable alternative to long highway trips.

The restoration of passenger rail service along the Prince George and North Vancouver corridor would significantly enhance mobility for Indigenous communities throughout the region. Many Nations are dispersed across vast distances, and reliable transportation is

Mayor Ron Paull

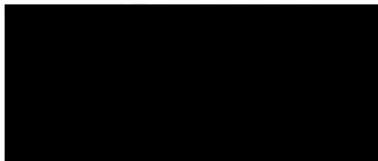
Councillors Scott Elliott, Tony Goulet, Debra McKelvie, Laurey-Anne Roodenburg, Martin Runge, Mitch Vik,



essential for accessing education, health care, cultural events, and inter-community gatherings. Improved passenger service would support stronger connections between Indigenous communities, foster greater participation in regional economic and cultural activities, and contribute to long-term reconciliation efforts by honouring Indigenous needs for safe and dependable transportation.

On behalf of Quesnel City Council, please give favourable consideration to the Prince George–North Vancouver Railway Engagement and Assessment.

Thank you for your time,



Mayor Ron Paull
City of Quesnel

Cc:
BC Municipalities and Regional Districts
reception@lhtako.com
BandAdmin@nazkoband.ca
bandmanager@esdilaghfn.com
bandadministrator@lhooskuz.com



DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN

File No. 0400-08

December 16, 2025

Hon. Christine Boyle
Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
Via email: hma.minister@gov.bc.ca

BC Municipalities Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills
P.MBCcommittee@leg.bc.ca

Dear Minister Boyle and BC Municipalities Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills,

Re: Bill M216 - Professional Reliance Act

On behalf of the District of Metchosin Council, I am writing to express our deep concerns and opposition to Bill M216, the *Professional Reliance Act*. We acknowledge the Province's commitment to address housing supply challenges and streamline approvals; however, this legislation challenges municipal authority in its significant overreach into municipal jurisdiction and is likely to create unnecessary risks.

As stated, it appears that Bill M216 would undermine local government decision-making authority and oversight over development projects, bypassing the professional expertise of municipal planners, engineers, and building officials, whose knowledge of local context is essential for responsible and sustainable development. It proposes to weaken local government oversight over approvals, bypassing local government oversight at the expense of due diligence in local decision-making in favour of expedited approvals. Under Bill M216, oversight over development shifts from our realm in the public sector, where it is transparent and democratically accountable, to the private sector, where the primary obligation is to the client rather than the broader community. Essentially, the bill removes authority from local governments potentially causing regulatory deadlock leaving projects entwined in the under-resourced dispute resolution process. Furthermore, local governments will be left in a precarious liability situation.

The lack of consultation on Bill M216 is concerning. The bill was introduced without any substantive discussions with local government officials as part of a clear and transparent process. Several local governments have raised questions and valid concerns about how Bill M216 would impact local government powers as defined in the *Local Government Act* and the *Land Title Act*. We believe that

significant legislative changes affecting development, land use and municipal authority need to be developed through a process of dialogue and engagement with local governments.

We respectfully request that the provincial government pause consideration of Bill M216 and engage in meaningful and substantive consultation with local governments before moving forward with changes that fundamentally alter local land use authority and the development process.

Sincerely



Marie-Térèse Little, PhD
Mayor

cc: Premier David Eby premier@gov.bc.ca
Hon. Brittany Anderson, Minister of State for Local Governments & Rural Communities
MSP.Minister@gov.bc.ca
MLA Lorne Doerkson, Cariboo Chilcotin Lorne.Doerkson.MLA@leg.bc.ca
MLA George Anderson george.anderson.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Cori Ramsay, President, UBCM cori.ramsay@princegeorge.ca
BC Municipalities
Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills
P.MBCommittee@leg.bc.ca



Honourable David Eby
Premier of British Columbia
Honourable Christine Boyle
Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Donegal Wilson
Member of the Legislative Assembly, Boundary - Similkameen

December 15, 2025

Subject: *Bill M216 Professional Reliance Act* – City of Greenwood Remarks

On behalf of the City of Greenwood, following a motion passed by Council on December 15, 2025. The City of Greenwood Council has directed that I convey our concerns regarding *Bill M216, the Professional Reliance Act*. While we share the Province's objective of increasing housing supply, we believe this legislation undermines the foundations of local democracy and responsible community planning.

Municipal councils are elected to represent their residents and are entrusted with balancing growth, sustainability, and community character. *Bill M216* would diminish that role by transferring key decision-making powers away from local governments and into provincial processes that lack the nuance of local context. Greenwood's professional staff and the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary's planners bring essential expertise to these matters, and their work is grounded in the realities of our community. Removing or sidelining that expertise risks poor outcomes and erodes public confidence.

Greenwood has consistently met housing requirements established by both the Province and our own Council. This demonstrates that municipalities are capable of delivering solutions without heavy-handed provincial intervention. Imposing a uniform framework across diverse communities disregards the unique circumstances of each municipality and penalizes those that have acted responsibly.

We are also troubled by the dispute resolution mechanism proposed in *Bill M216*. Assigning authority to the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance - an office without mandate or capacity in local land-use planning - creates uncertainty and weakens accountability. Residents expect their elected representatives to make these decisions, not an external body removed from community realities.

For these reasons, Greenwood Council urges the Province to suspend implementation of *Bill M216* and to engage in genuine consultation with municipalities and professional organizations. Constructive dialogue will ensure that housing goals are advanced while respecting local autonomy and preserving democratic governance.

We remain committed to working with the Province on housing solutions that strengthen communities, respect municipal authority, and uphold public trust.

Sincerely,



Mayor John Bolt

cc: Dean Trumbley, Chief Administrative Officer
Brooke McCourt, Corporate Officer
Donna Dean, RDKB Manager of Planning and Development
Brian Champlin, RDKB Manager of Building Inspection Services
BC Municipalities & Regional District

December 9, 2025

Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills
c/o Parliamentary Committees Office
Room 224, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Chair Amna Shah:

Re: Town of Osoyoos concerns with the proposed *Professional Reliance Act* (Bill M216)

On behalf of the Council of the Town of Osoyoos, I am writing to express concerns regarding the recently introduced *Professional Reliance Act* (Bill M216), currently before the Legislative Assembly as a private member's bill.

While we support provincial efforts to streamline development approvals and improve housing delivery, several aspects of the proposed legislation raise substantial governance, risk management, and operational issues for local governments. More specifically, Council's concerns relate to the following matters:

1. Loss of Local Government Flexibility and Oversight

The Bill proposes to prohibit local governments from requiring peer reviews of professional reports certified under the *Professional Governance Act*, except with authorization from the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance (OSPG). As drafted, this restriction applies broadly to "submissions" provided under a development approval process, including rezonings, OCP amendments, development permits, variances, temporary use permits, phased development agreements, heritage permits, and building permit-related assessments.

This approach would effectively impose a one-size-fits-all approval framework across B.C. and remove an important tool that local governments rely on to ensure that professional reports are complete, reliable, and consistent with local bylaws, development guidelines, environmental protection measures, and hazard mitigation standards. Even though the Town of Osoyoos has not historically required third-party reviews, maintaining the authority to do so remains essential to ensure due diligence and uphold public interest.

2. Risk of Increased Delays to Development

Contrary to the Bill's stated intention of accelerating development, the proposed dispute-resolution mechanism—relying on the OSPG to assess disagreements over professional findings—poses a significant risk of introducing new delays. The OSPG is not currently mandated or resourced to adjudicate such disputes, and local governments may experience extended application stalls while awaiting provincial direction. This outcome would be inconsistent with the Province's recent efforts to streamline land-use approvals and increase housing supply.

3. Liability and Risk Exposure

Although the Bill asserts that local governments will be shielded from liability for relying on certified submissions, it does not prevent local governments from being named in legal claims. In cases where the responsible professional is unavailable or underinsured, local governments may face joint and several liability exposure. This represents a material financial risk for the public sector and contradicts the Bill's stated purpose of reducing administrative burdens.

4. Loss of Local Government Flexibility and Oversight

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) has advised that the proposed Act was not subject to the typical policy development or consultation processes associated with government bills. System-wide changes to local government approval authority should not be advanced without meaningful engagement with the municipalities and regional districts who will be responsible for administering the resulting framework. Early consultation ensures policies are practical, aligned with public expectations, and grounded in operational realities.

5. Proposed Mandatory Timelines for Development Processing

The Town is also concerned by the Bill's enabling provisions to establish mandatory processing timelines for development applications through regulation. In other jurisdictions, failure to issue a decision within a prescribed timeline results in deemed approvals. Such an approach does not account for the significant variation in resources, complexity of applications, and statutory obligations across B.C.'s diverse local governments, and may lead to sub-optimal or unsafe development outcomes.

In light of these issues, the Town respectfully requests that:

1. The Province suspend further consideration of Bill M216 pending comprehensive consultation with local governments and UBCM;
2. The Ministry undertake a detailed review of potential liability impacts, dispute-resolution timelines, and operational implications; and
3. Any future professional-reliance reforms be developed collaboratively with local governments to ensure they support both efficient development and public safety.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns and please know that the Town of Osoyoos would welcome the opportunity to participate in further dialogue on this matter and that I can be reached at 250-498-1857 or by email at smckortoff@osooyoos.ca.

Yours truly,



Sue McKortoff, Mayor 
Town of Osoyoos

Enclosure(s)

C: The Honourable Christine Boyle, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs

CC: Union of British Columbia Municipalities



December 10, 2025

File No. 0530-01

Hon. Christine Boyle
Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Via email: hma.minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Boyle:

Re: Bill M216 – *Professional Reliance Act*

On behalf of City of Williams Lake Council, I am writing to express our concerns and opposition to Bill M216, the *Professional Reliance Act*. While we acknowledge the Province's commitment to addressing housing supply challenges and streamlining approvals, this legislation represents a significant overreach into municipal jurisdiction and is likely to create unnecessary risks related to both human and environmental health and safety.

It appears to us that Bill M216 would undermine local government decision-making authority and oversight over development projects, bypassing the professional expertise of municipal planners, engineers, and building officials, whose knowledge of local context is essential for responsible and sustainable development.

Protection of Local Knowledge

The City of Williams Lake, like many local governments, has been diligently striving to improve and streamline development approval processes in alignment with local and provincial housing goals, while also ensuring the long-term tenets of public safety and economic and environmental sustainability are protected. Members of the development review staff, regulated by their respective professional bodies, work closely and collaboratively with developers to ensure the above goals are met, and yet frequently find themselves reviewing plans and drawings created by individuals that are unfamiliar with local, regional, or even provincial context. City staff often note omissions and concerns with designs that would have a significant local impact if implemented - for instance related to unique geotechnical or transportation conditions - but would go unnoticed and unaddressed by those unfamiliar with such dynamics. Often developers' professionals face pressure to prioritize budget and schedule constraints over the need to build safer and more sustainable neighbourhoods that reflect community needs and protect the environment over the long-term.

The Opposite Effect – Increased Delays

It is ultimately inevitable that a local government will face a situation where concerns about the quality, accuracy, or assumptions of a professional cannot be left unaddressed in good conscience. Often resolved quickly via open dialogue and comments from staff, Bill M216 will force a new practice of referring the matter to the provincial Superintendent of Professional

Governance for formal dispute resolution. This office focuses on professional regulation, not deliberation on the unique technical aspects of professional work in settings across the province. As such, requiring the Superintendent to resolve potential disputes from multiple municipalities, each with the potential for many annual developments, will almost certainly lead to increased inefficiencies and processing delays, exacerbating the very issue Bill M216 seeks to address.

In short, British Columbians that live, play, and raise families in local communities expect decisions regarding their safety and health to be made by those with local accountability and vested, personal interest in their neighbours – not delegated to remote consultants or developers that are motivated primarily by financial gain.

Although the City of Williams Lake recognizes the need for increased housing and supports efforts to accelerate delivery, 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.

Yours truly,



Mayor Surinderpal Rathor

C: Premier David Eby premier@gov.bc.ca
Hon. Brittny Anderson, Minister of State for Local Governments &
Rural Communities MSP.Minister@gov.bc.ca
MLA Lorne Doerkson, Cariboo Chilcotin Lorne.Doerkson.MLA@leg.bc.ca
MLA George Anderson george.anderson.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Cori Ramsay, President, UBCM cori.ramsay@princegeorge.ca
BC Municipalities
Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills PMBCcommittee@leg.bc.ca





TOWN OF VIEW ROYAL

45 View Royal Avenue, Victoria, BC, Canada V9B 1A6
Ph. 250-479-6800 • E. info@viewroyal.ca • www.viewroyal.ca

December 4, 2025

Sent via Email

LETTER TO ALL BC MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

Dear Mayor and Council,

RE: Judicial Review of Provincial Housing Laws — Bills 44, 47, 13, 15, and M216

Municipalities across British Columbia are now subject to a suite of provincial housing laws — Bills 44, 47, 13, 15, and M216 — introduced and passed at remarkable speed, with limited consultation and, in some cases, under non-disclosure agreements that prevented open discussion. The timing of these Bills, released after the UBCM resolution deadline, removed the only coordinated opportunity for local governments to provide input or seek policy direction. As a result, councils were left without a meaningful role in shaping legislation that fundamentally alters their authority.

These Bills are not simply about housing supply. Individually and collectively, they alter how local democracy functions. Powers traditionally exercised by elected councils have shifted to prescriptive provincial requirements and external decision-makers. The cancellation of public hearings for many zoning decisions has further limited residents' ability to participate in community planning. Taken together, these changes raise serious questions about whether local governments can continue to operate as accountable democratic institutions.

View Royal Council has authorized the Mayor and CAO to explore a coordinated Judicial Review and to invite other municipalities to consider joining. The purpose of such a review is not to oppose housing, but to obtain clarity on whether the Province acted within lawful limits and whether proper democratic and procedural safeguards were respected.

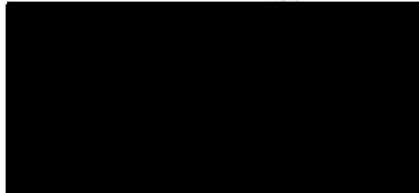
A Judicial Review would seek answers to key questions:

- Whether these Bills, individually or combined, have eroded councils' capacity to govern and consult their residents.
- Whether eliminating public hearings is consistent with procedural fairness.
- Whether the Province exceeded its authority in reshaping core municipal land use powers.
- Whether the speed, secrecy, and timing of the legislative process met principles of responsible governance.
- What limits exist on unilateral changes to local democratic authority.

Without clarity, municipalities are left uncertain about their future role and accountability to their communities.

We invite your council to consider joining a coalition of municipalities to examine these issues together and to share the associated work and costs.

Sincerely,



Mayor Sid Tobias
Town of View Royal

Email: mayortobias@viewroyal.ca

or

c/o View Royal Town Hall
45 View Royal Avenue, Victoria BC V9B 1A6

Email: mayorandcouncil@viewroyal.ca

Attached: **Appendix with Sample Resolutions**

APPENDIX: SAMPLE RESOLUTION FOR COUNCILS

RE: Judicial Review of Provincial Housing Laws — Bills 44, 47, 13, 15, and M216

- THAT Council express its interest in joining a coalition of British Columbia municipalities and regional districts to evaluate and potentially pursue a coordinated Judicial Review of provincial housing legislation, including Bills 44, 47, 13, 15, and M216;
- AND THAT Council note concerns regarding the lack of consultation, the use of non-disclosure agreements, the timing of legislative release after the UBCM resolution deadline, the removal of public hearings, and the cumulative erosion of local democratic authority;
- AND THAT Council support the creation of a joint municipal working group to identify shared legal issues, coordinate information, and explore cost-sharing;
- AND THAT Council authorize the Mayor or designate to engage with participating municipalities and report back on legal options, partnership structures, and financial implications.



City of Parksville
Office of the Mayor

December 12, 2025

The Honourable David Eby, Premier
The Honourable Brenda Bailey, Minister of Finance
Stephanie Higginson, MLA, Ladysmith-Oceanside
George Anderson, MLA, Nanaimo-Lantzville

Re: Bill M216 - Professional Reliance Act

On behalf of the Council of the City of Parksville, I am writing to express our strong opposition to Bill M216, the Professional Reliance Act.

While we recognize the intent of the legislation to streamline development approvals and reduce administrative costs, we have serious concerns about the implications for local governance and community planning. Bill M216 would force local governments to accept submissions certified by registered professionals as meeting permit or bylaw requirements, effectively removing municipal discretion and oversight. This represents a serious erosion of local authority and undermines the role of local governments as the order of government closest to citizens and best positioned to reflect community priorities. Moreover, the proposed changes create liability for local governments, with limited recourse for reparations.

Furthermore, the bill was introduced without meaningful engagement or consultation with local governments or the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). Systemic changes of this magnitude should be developed collaboratively to avoid unintended consequences. Shifting approval processes from local governments to private professionals and provincial dispute resolution mechanisms raises questions about accountability, liability, and public interest. It also places additional strain on the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance, which may not be adequately resourced for this expanded role.

Moreover, local governments are already adapting to significant legislative changes handed down from the Province, including housing targets under the *Housing Supply Act*, Bills 44 and 47 on small-scale multi-unit housing and transit-oriented development, and the *Infrastructure Projects Act*, among numerous others. Adding another sweeping change without consultation risks overwhelming municipal capacity and delaying critical housing and infrastructure projects.

.../2

For these reasons, the City of Parksville supports UBCM's position and urges the Province to withdraw Bill M216. Any future changes to local approval processes should be developed through a transparent, consultative process that respects local autonomy and ensures practical implementation. We also request that the Province engage with local governments and UBCM to explore alternative solutions that balance efficiency with accountability and community input.

The City of Parksville sponsored resolution EB77, which was endorsed at both the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities annual convention and the Union of BC Municipalities annual convention. The resolution urges the Province to conduct meaningful technical level consultation with local governments about the feasibility and practicality of implementation, prior to amending legislation that affects the capacity and authority of local governments; to consider reasonable timelines for local governments to adapt to legislative changes; to consider the timing of multiple significant changes to core legislation across multiple topics; to coordinate the release of regulations and policy with statute amendments to assist local government staff in meeting timelines; and to provide sustained core funding to local governments to accompany permanent changes that create additional workload for local government staff. We strongly encourage the Province to heed the voices of many local governments across BC who endorsed this resolution.

Thank you for considering the concerns being voiced by the City of Parksville, the Union of BC Municipalities and many other local governments. We look forward to working collaboratively on solutions that strengthen, rather than diminish, local governance.

Sincerely,



DOUG O'BRIEN
Mayor

cc: Council
Union of BC Municipalities Executive
Union of BC Municipalities Members

south cariboo arts
& culture society (scacs)

250-395-2021
parksidecentre@shaw.ca



Physical Address:
Parkside Art Gallery
401 Cedar Ave
100 Mile House, BC

Mailing Address:
SCACS
Box 1210,
100 Mile House, BC V0K 2E0

December 5, 2025

Todd Conway and Tammy Boulanger
District Office of 100 Mile House

Re: repaired window at Parkside Art Gallery

I write to advise that the final south-facing window at 100 Mile House was repaired in November, incurring a cost of \$271.04 for the glass, plus \$773.00 in contractor costs, for a total of \$1,044.04. Although we initially approached you with a request to be reimbursed, it is our intent to cover this fee from operating funds.

The District is generous in providing this building, based on the assumption that we bring value to the community by our involvement. We've appreciated the various ways we've found to collaborate and intend to continue to pursue this goal.

With appreciation,

Patsy Granberg
Parkside Art Gallery

December 12, 2025

File No. 0530-01 / 1-70-23

Hon. Ravi Parmar
Minister of Forests
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Sent via email: FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Parmar:

Re: Urgent Request to Fund Cariboo Chilcotin Business Resilience and Diversification Initiative

I am writing with urgency and deep concern for the ongoing downturn in the forest industry and the collateral damage deeply affecting the many contractors and suppliers for forest product companies in the Cariboo Chilcotin. The closure of West Fraser's 100 Mile House mill, the Drax Pellet Plant closure, curtailments at West Fraser Williams Lake and Tolko Williams Lake as well as impacts to small longtime community contributors such as Sigurdson Forest Products have been a significant blow to our community.

I have previously written to your office to request the immediate reinstatement of the Bridging to Retirement program. We hope that the provincial government is seriously considering this - an announcement prior to Christmas would be extremely encouraging for the community. We have been busy working with the local WorkBC Centre, Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin and Williams Lake and District Chamber of Commerce to ensure that employees impacted by layoffs have the supports that they need. I am heartened that the City is able to meaningfully participate in this collaborative effort, and has paid to have a number of "Path Forward Transition Planning Guides" printed to support these workers with all of the local resources that can assist them. There are a number of programs available to employees that have been laid off to transition to other work, and I am hopeful that they are able to find the assistance they require.

I urge you to not forget the contracting community that is a significant portion of our local economy. For every one production job lost, there is an impact to four contract companies. We are hearing from these companies, and unfortunately we do not have any resources to support them in a meaningful way. However, we do have a local solution that would be very easy to reinstate with the support of provincial or federal funding.

The local Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin (CFCC) office has been working in this area, utilizing various funding streams over the past eight years. Their programs have made a meaningful and positive impact on businesses. Originally funded as wildfire response, the CFCC assistance program shifted to a pandemic response and was subsequently funded as a disaster assistance response to the impacts of the floods and fires. While the funding and focus of the program has been adapted to meet evolving needs, the intent of the program has remained the same: one on one navigation support for impacted businesses. The disaster navigator is an employee within the CFCC office that works directly with impacted business owners to determine what steps, programs and

solutions are best for them. They have a library of training that business owners can access, make referrals to other agencies, support the business owner with applications for outside training and funding, and most importantly provide a \$5000 budget for the business to hire and work with a business consultant that is specific to their industry. With this funding, they are able to do the very important and often overlooked strategic planning work that supports their growth, development and pivot to new sectors. This program works, and I am convinced it is one of the reasons that Williams Lake's economy has been able to stay mostly stable through all of these events.

CFCC has confirmed that they would be able to quickly reinstate this program, hire back the key Navigator position and be available to start supporting impacted businesses immediately. We do not need to waste time reinventing a program for contractors when we have one that has been proven to be successful in the Cariboo Chilcotin, and has in fact been replicated in other areas of BC. The benefit of immediately funding them is that their region includes 100 Mile House, which also needs these kinds of supports.

City staff have been working with CFCC to reach out to Pacific-Can for funding, and have alerted the local Ministry of Jobs and Economic Growth team of the opportunity to start working with impacted businesses. This is support that our community desperately needs.

As a first step, a commitment to CFCC of \$250,000 would get this up and running. I was informed that there is some JEG REDIP Transition funding that could be available, but currently that is only \$50,000 and is application based. This is not enough to address the region's immediate needs, and I urge you to consider special funding to get this program up and running as you determine what other options will be available with the federal funding that was promised to BC.

I must again state the urgency of meeting this need head on. We do not have time to wait for programs to be developed, application windows to open, and decisions to be made. We are presenting an immediate solution that will see companies have support in the New Year. This is the response that the community requires, and I am confident we can deliver with your timely assistance.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, I trust that you will bring this to your colleagues that need to be part of this solution.

We appreciate your assistance, and remain committed to working with your Ministry on practical, effective solutions to help our community thrive.

Sincerely,



Mayor Surinderpal Rathor

c: Premier David Eby
Hon. Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs and Economic Growth
MP Todd Doherty, Cariboo-Prince George
MLA Lorne Doerkson, Cariboo Chilcotin





Rural Coordination Centre of BC

620-1665 West Broadway

Vancouver, BC V6J 1X1

604-738-8222 (direct) | 1 877 908 8222 (toll free)

December 2025

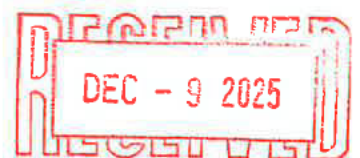
Hello from the Rural Coordination Centre of BC (RCCbc)! My name is Alice Muirhead and I am the Director of Engagement and Outreach. I'm delighted to share this package of resources with you in the hope that one or more of these programs will be of interest to your community.

RCCbc is a network of hundreds of people—rural physicians and other healthcare providers, healthcare administrators, community members, policymakers, educators, researchers, and non-profit and business leaders—dedicated to improving the health of rural and remote communities.

Relationships are at the heart of all our programs and services. We're always interested in hearing what's working in communities, what the challenges are, and how we can help. Please don't hesitate to contact us to find out more or just to chat. We're here for you!

Sincerely,

Alice Muirhead
Director of Engagement and Outreach
e: amuirhead@rccbc.ca
t: 250-552-5288





Rural Coordination Centre of BC

Led by rural physicians, the Rural Coordination Centre of BC (RCCbc) is a network that improves the health of rural people and communities. Funded primarily by the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues, our network partners include healthcare providers, healthcare administrators, community members, policymakers, educators, researchers, and non-profit and business leaders. We serve all communities in British Columbia covered by the Rural Practice Subsidiary Agreement.

What We Do

Cultivate Relationships and Networks

We connect people who are passionate about, or play a role in, enhancing rural health equity in British Columbia—from rural citizens and physicians to municipal and Indigenous leaders to provincial policymakers.

Facilitate Rural Health Discussion

We co-create safe spaces for network partners to engage in frank discussion about rural health challenges, explore common solutions to improve rural health, and align our work as partners.

Coordinate Rural Health Projects

We coordinate innovative projects that expand our network and enhance the ability for rural physicians and other healthcare providers to deliver timely, safe, and effective care to rural patients in British Columbia.

Create Learning Opportunities for Rural Healthcare Practitioners

We co-develop continuing medical education, continuing professional development, and mentorship opportunities in collaboration with rural family physicians to enhance rural health providers' skills, scope, and resilience at all stages of their careers.

Advocate for a Healthy Rural British Columbia

We use our personal and shared experiences, as well as rural health research evidence, to effect changes to provincial policies that improve the health of rural British Columbians.

Stimulate Rural Health Research

We provide grants and offer other support to rural physicians and medical students to carry out culturally safe and rurally relevant research that informs policy and improves healthcare practice and delivery.

Develop Healthcare Leaders

We support and develop people in becoming healthcare leaders in their chosen fields of interest and expertise.

Contact

620-1665 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 1X1

✉ info@rccbc.ca

☎ 604-738-8222 (direct)

☎ 1-877-908-8222 (toll free)

🌐 rccbc.ca





The Rural Voices Initiative

The Rural Voices Initiative, led by the Rural Coordination Centre of BC (RCCbc), supports communities to share knowledge, identify common goals, and take action on local health and wellness issues.

Rural, remote, First Nations, and Métis Chartered communities across BC can connect with RCCbc for flexible support to plan and host meaningful engagement, from one-time gatherings to ongoing dialogue.

Your Community. Your Voice. Your Way.

We can help your community with:

- Facilitation training or on-the-ground support for community conversations
- Financial support for engagement venues, refreshments, child care, and travel (over 50 km)
- Up to \$2000 in flexible funding to grow ideas that emerge from engagement sessions
- Connections to health, social, academic, non-profit, and government partners across BC

What this could look like:

- A dinner bringing Elders, youth, and healthcare providers together
- A community walk to discuss local wellness priorities
- Support for a new or existing community health table
- Training to help local facilitators lead ongoing conversations

Want to learn more?



Connect with our Engagement & Outreach Team: ruralvoices@rccbc.ca



rccbc.ca/rural-voices-gathering



**Rural
Coordination
Centre**
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Quality Team Coaching for Rural BC

Quality Team Coaching for Rural BC (QTC4RBC) is a coaching program that empowers teams to regroup and reconnect with their purpose and take steps toward building their desired team culture and advancing their chosen goals. When healthcare teams are able to rekindle joy and meaning in their work, they're more able to create a positive work environment, optimize their team's performance, and increase the quality and safety of care for patients.

Why do Quality Coaching?

Evidence shows that effective teams create a culture that both improves patient safety and enhances satisfaction and joy for healthcare providers.

Teams enrolled in the program will participate in:

1. A one day in-person coaching workshop in your community with an International Coaching Federation (ICF) certified coach to lay the foundation for coaching towards highly effective teams. Coaches currently working with QTC4RBC are Drs. Rahul Gupta, Cecile Andreas and Tom Wright.
2. Up to four 1.5 hour virtual team coaching sessions in the months following the workshop
3. Up to three leadership coaching sessions

Program eligibility:

Any rural health care team, with priority given to:

- RSA A or B communities
- Remote and/or underserved populations
- Interprofessional teams
- Leadership participation in the program

How to apply:

Please visit rccbc.ca/qtc4rbc for more information about eligibility, how to apply, and to download the Expression of Interest form.

If you are interested in bringing together your team to apply for this program, contact tdeleeuw@rccbc.ca and we can help you develop application.

Contact

Tracey DeLeeuw
Project & Research Facilitator
tdeleeuw@rccbc.ca

620-1665 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 1X1

- ✉ info@rccbc.ca
- ☎ 604-738-8222 (direct)
- ☎ 1-877-908-8222 (toll free)
- 🌐 rccbc.ca/qtc4rbc





Real-Time
Virtual Support

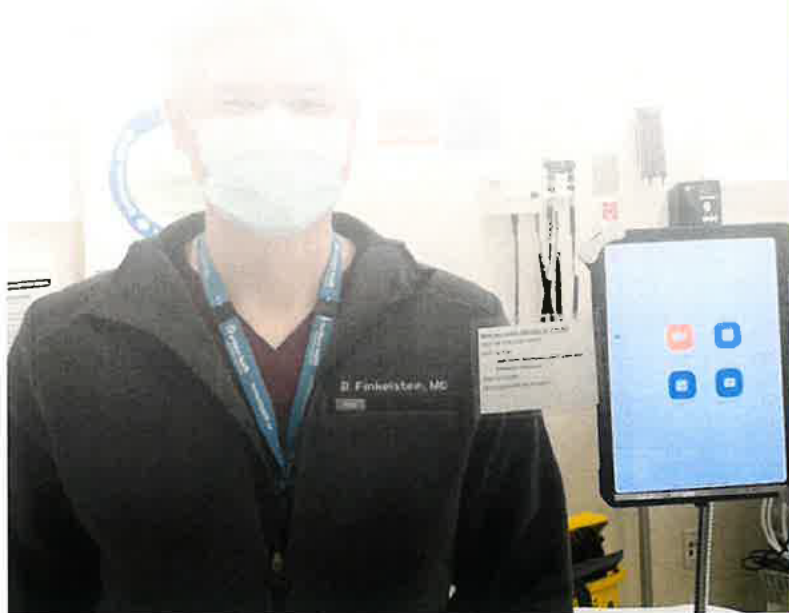


Rural
Coordination
Centre
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

RTVS Peer Pathways

Rural providers in BC (physicians, midwives, residents, nurse practitioners, nurses etc.) can connect with on-call Real-Time Virtual Support (RTVS) peer pathway providers at the click of a button. The virtual providers support the work of healthcare teams over Zoom or through a phone call and are available around the clock.

Calling an RTVS virtual provider is like calling a friend. They offer friendly, compassionate, non-judgmental, and culturally safe support while understanding the context of providing care in rural places.



More about RTVS

RTVS is publicly funded and available to all providers in rural, remote and First Nations communities.

Benefits of RTVS

RTVS peer pathways help ensure that rural healthcare providers are properly supported and rural patients receive more equitable access to healthcare. More specifically, RTVS pathways:

- Increase confidence, and reduce isolation, of healthcare providers who provide patient care in rural, remote, and First Nations communities in British Columbia.
- Increase mentoring and educational opportunities for rural healthcare providers—especially new-to-practice physicians.
- Provide a safety net that helps improve the recruitment and retention of rural healthcare providers.
- Provide overnight virtual support to prevent hospital diversions.
- Add instant access maternity, pediatric, critical care and internal medicine capacity.
- Increase availability and access to timely, quality healthcare services for patients in rural, remote, and First Nations communities, reducing their risk, time, and expense traveling for medical appointments.
- Offer a cost-effective and sustainable model for British Columbia's health system needs.

Pathways

Instant Access Pathways for Rural Providers

- Emergency (RUDI)
- Maternity and newborn (MaBAL)
- Pediatrics (CHARLIE)
- Critical Care and Internal Medicine (ROCCI)

Quick Reply Pathways (weekdays)

- Dermatology
- Hematology
- Myofascial pain (myoLIVE)
- Rheumatology (RheumVision)
- Thrombosis
- Neurology
- RTVS POCUS (Point of Care Ultrasound)
- Oncology
- Pharmacists
- Orthopaedics
- Spinal Cord Injury Navigation

Consultation to Conversation

Three-way video conference consultations between patients, primary care providers and specialists.



2026 BC RURAL HEALTH AWARDS



RCCbc presents the awards each year to recognize and honour rural physicians, communities, and residents for their inspiring contributions to improving the health of rural British Columbians.

Award Categories:

- Rural BC Community Award
- Award of Excellence in Rural Medicine: Lifetime Achievement
- Resident Leadership Award



Nisga'a Valley Communities
2025 Rural BC Community Award Winner

SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATION BY JANUARY 5



● rccbc.ca/awards

● communications@rccbc.ca

● (604) 738-8222



Dzawada'enuxw First Nation
Kwakwakw'akw Traditional Territory
30km East of Port McNeill

Site Visits By the Numbers

7

Years

131

Communities

*155 unique communities

438

Interviews

RURAL SITE VISITS PROJECT



*View a map of
communities visited



Rural
Coordination
Centre
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Update

Hello from the Rural Coordination Centre of BC!

We hope this finds you well. It has been some time since our last update, and we want to reconnect and share what's next. First, we want to thank you sincerely. During the Site Visits Project, communities welcomed us with warmth, openness, and generosity. Your insights, hospitality, and stories shaped our understanding of rural healthcare and continue to guide our work.

Since the Site Visits Program paused, we've reflected on the barriers communities and our team faced, especially during COVID, and reimagined how to make connections easier, more meaningful, and tailored to each community's needs. The Site Visits Program, as it existed, has now transitioned into Engagement & Outreach within RCCbc.

RCCbc remains committed to connecting with communities in many ways, including:

- Community visits
- Community education
- Program and project work
- Annual BC Rural Health Conference (including our BC Rural Health Awards)
- Rural Immersion Trips
- Sustainability Tables
- and more

Through Engagement & Outreach, RCCbc also continues to support the Rural Voices Gathering and the Rural Voices Initiative, helping communities form local partnership tables. For more information on how your community can access these supports, please contact our team at ruralvoices@rccbc.ca.

We also invite you to stay connected with us through:

- See all of our projects in our interactive Annual Reports: <https://rccbc.ca/about-us/annual-reports/>
- Joining our newsletter and hear about upcoming events: <https://rccbc.ca/>

We are grateful for your past participation and warm welcomes, and we look forward to continuing to connect and amplify the strengths and priorities of rural and remote communities across BC.

With Gratitude,



Krystal Wong



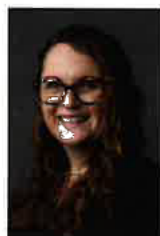
Paul Kendal



Jayleen Emery



Alice Muirhead



Bree Loeffler



Danette Dawkin



Tracey DeLeeuw

From: BC Rural Health Network <newsletter@bcruralhealth.org>
Sent: December 15, 2025 8:41 AM
To: District of 100 Mile
Subject: Rural Health Matters Mid December 2025 Edition



BCRHN

**British Columbia
Rural Health Network**

Mid December 2025
Edition

Save the date!

BC Rural Health Network

2025 AGM

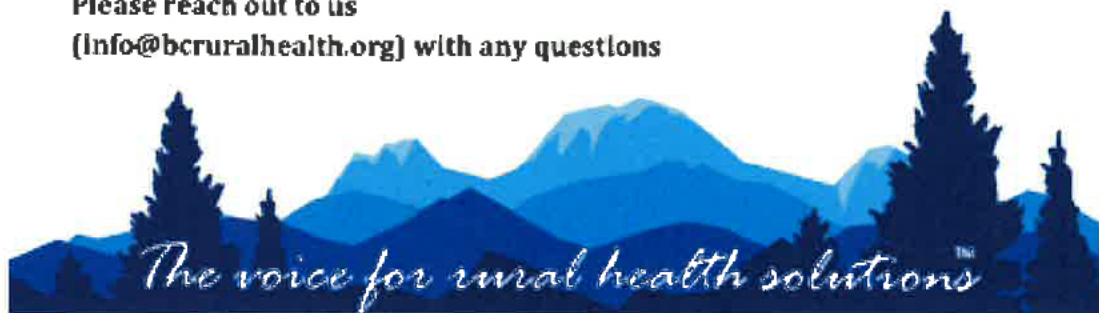
We will be holding our Annual General Meeting on
December 17th at 3:00 pm PST

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) with any questions



From the Desk of the Executive Director

Dear Readers,

As we close out the year, I want to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has supported the BC Rural Health Network over the past year. Your engagement, encouragement, and collaboration continue to strengthen our collective voice and reinforce the importance of advocating for equitable access to health care for people living in rural and remote communities across British Columbia.

I am especially grateful for the many messages of support and well wishes I have received. They have been deeply appreciated and a powerful reminder of the strength and compassion within this network.

As we look ahead to 2026, my hope is for improved health and wellness for all – personally, within our families and communities, and across the systems we continue to work to improve. The year ahead will bring new challenges, but also new opportunities to advance meaningful, community-led solutions grounded in equity, dignity, and care.

Thank you for walking alongside us in this work. I wish you a restful holiday season and a healthy, hopeful start to the new year.



Happy Holidays!

Paul

Paul Adams

Executive Director

BC Rural Health Network

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!

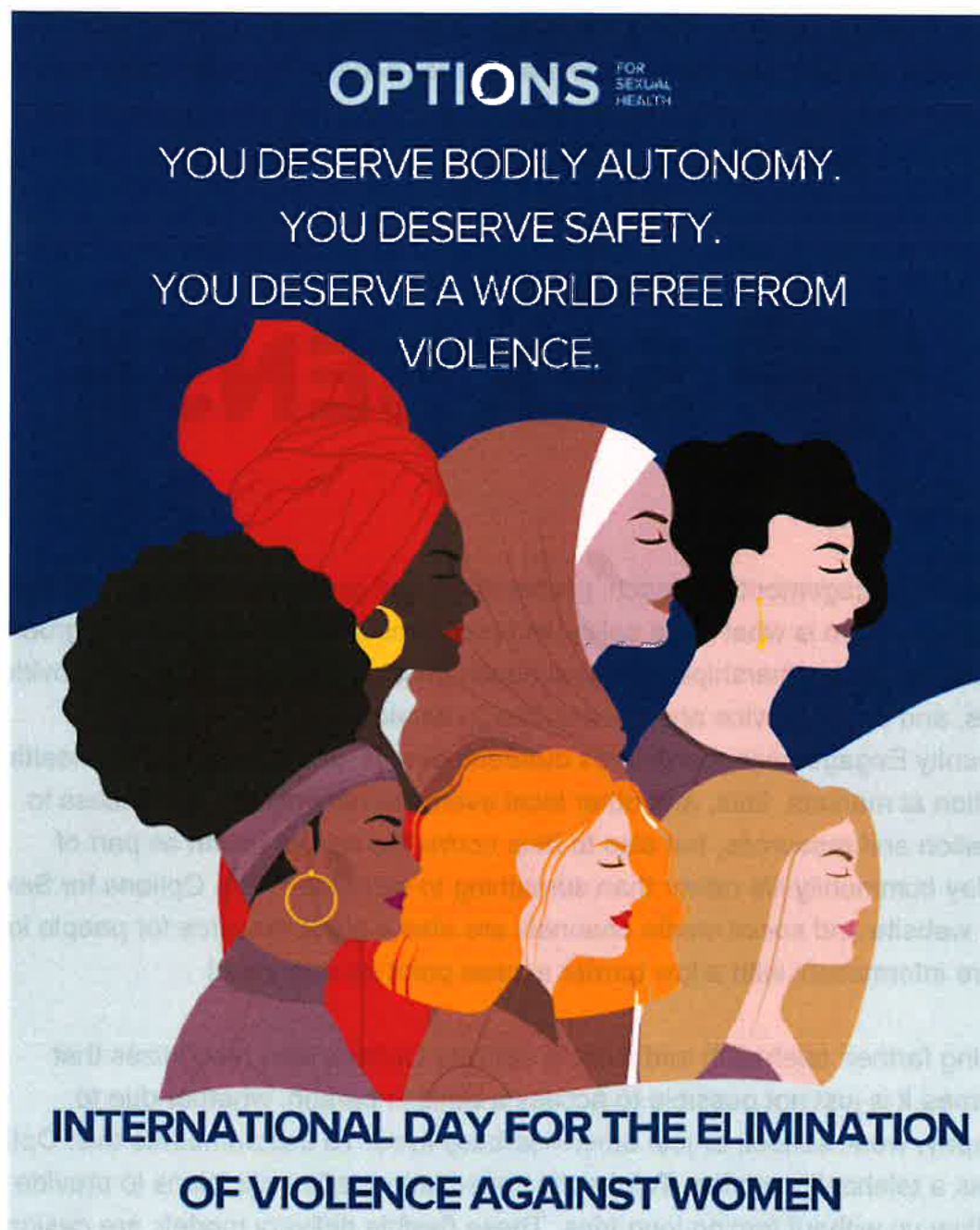


Community Engagement: outreach, partnerships and presence Options' Community Engagement team is what turns policy and programs into real reach on the ground. That team builds partnerships with rural health centres, Indigenous health providers, schools, and social service agencies to design services that 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 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

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

Website: 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.

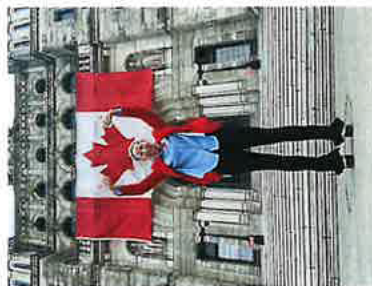
How to Get Involved

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.

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

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 or contact the Cancer Information Helpline at 1-888-939-3333.



Travel Assistance with Kindness and Compassion!



We look forward to connecting with you.



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You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.

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BCRHN

British Columbia
Rural Health Network

Tammy Boulanger

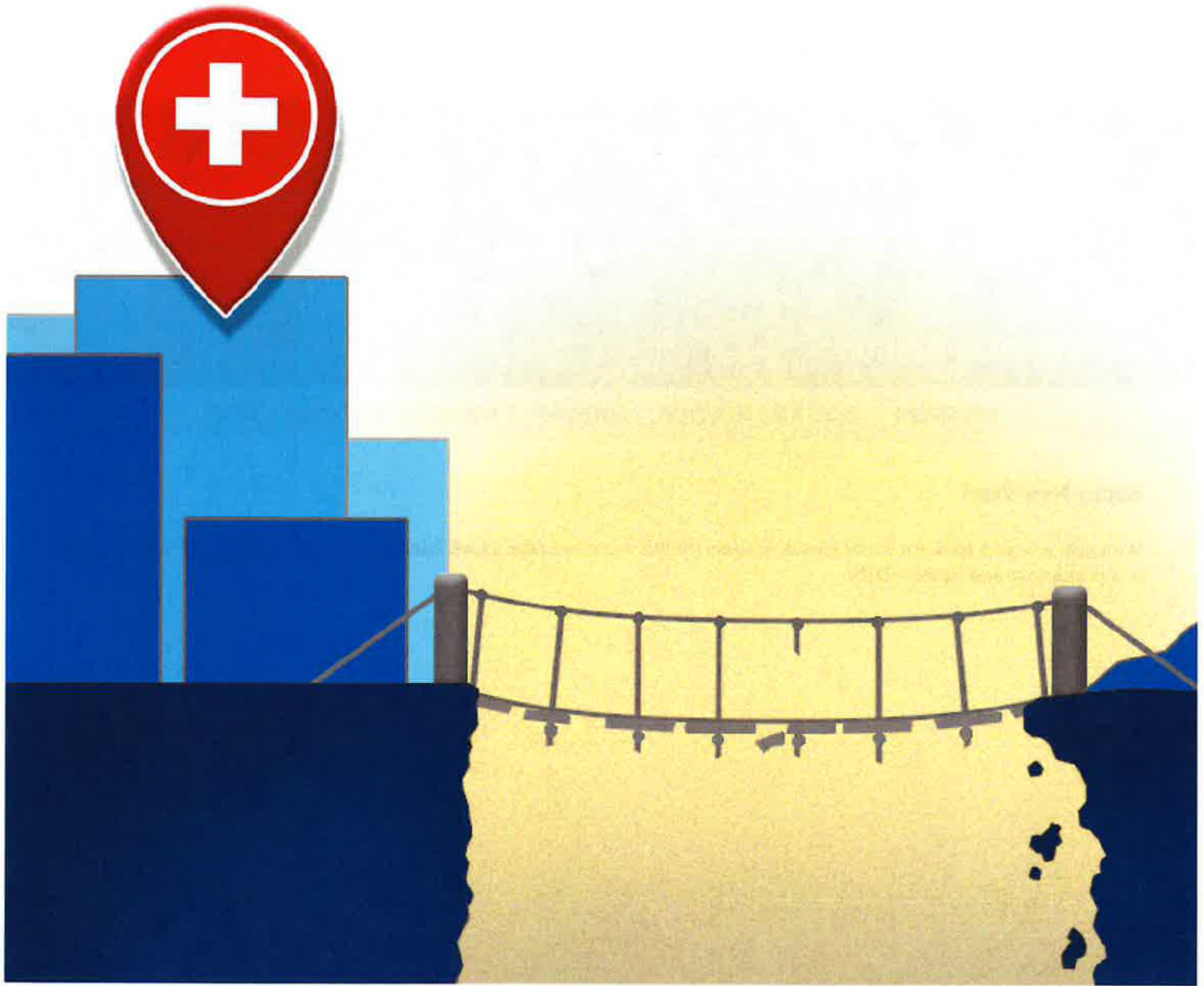
From: District of 100 Mile
Subject: FW: Happy New Year!

Rural Health Matters - monthly updates on rural health in British Columbia.



Happy New Year!

Welcome to a new look for Rural Health Matters. In this issue, we take a look back at our work in 2025 and look forward to a prosperous and healthy 2026.



From the President

Governance and direction

Happy New Year!

I hope you all enjoyed a season filled with joy, peace, and time with family and friends. I know I certainly did, and I am grateful for the opportunity to begin a new year together.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on December 17. True to rural living, I lost power and had intermittent cell service, which meant I was in and out of the meeting. My apologies for any distractions. That said, it was also a

wonderful reminder of the strength and resilience of rural communities. When challenges arise, people step up, and that is exactly what happened. I am so grateful for our Board and staff, who seamlessly carried on. You truly are amazing.

For a full reflection on the past year, please see the [2025 President's Year-End Report](#).

As we move into 2026, I would like to highlight some of the key work we are carrying forward.

Funding for the BC Rural Health Network (BCRHN) continues to be both a challenge and a top priority. Securing sustainable funding is essential if we are to remain actively involved in the critical discussions shaping rural and remote health care. Expanding our capacity to engage, advocate, and collaborate remains a central focus for the year ahead.

We are pleased to share that BCRHN has received a new contract with the [Ministry of Health](#) that strongly aligns with our mission and values. This work will focus on community engagement to inform improvements to health system response to patient harm.

I am very pleased to welcome Kristy Bjaranson and Joe McCulloch back to the Board, and to warmly welcome Phoebe Lazier Junker as a new director. Many of you will recognize Phoebe from her previous work with us in community outreach. We are delighted to have her return in this new capacity.

In December, I attended the [Rural Coordination Centre of BC \(RCCbc\)](#) Core Meeting, where I again had the opportunity to present, as part of the team, on the importance of Personal Health Records. It is something that I believe will affect the ability for patients and health providers to positively impact patient care and provider satisfaction.

Paul and I attended our quarterly meeting with RCCbc, focusing on how we can best support one another. These conversations continue to reinforce our shared commitment to advancing rural health equity across British Columbia.

[The second CARGA report](#) has also been released, and [Paul's analysis](#) is, as always, insightful and comprehensive. I encourage members to review his report. As always, the key question will be whether these recommendations are matched with the necessary funding to allow for appropriate follow through.

[The Real Time Virtual Support \(RTVS\)](#) program has proven itself to be a great initiative to support rural physicians and health care, and it is critical that these services continue to be funded. They are truly a lifeline to rural and remote communities and the residents they serve. There are also encouraging developments underway for rural and remote health, including initiatives related to RTVS, which, with proper funding, can be strengthened and expanded.

Telemedicine and virtual care remain essential services, not optional extras. Recruitment, retention, and physician support must be fully funded if rural and remote communities are to be adequately served.

Emergency Room and Hospital Closures continue throughout our province. This continues to have major impact on the residents of BC and especially those in rural and remote areas. We will not become complacent with these situations as they become all too familiar, but will continue to encourage action and problem-solving to address these all-too-common events.

Patient and community voices are critically important. If you have the opportunity, I strongly encourage you to participate as a [Patient Partner](#). Rural perspectives must be part of these conversations.

As always, my sincere thanks to all Board members, liaisons, and volunteers for your continued commitment, time, and energy in support of BCRHN's mission to achieve health equity for all residents of British Columbia.

And to our members, thank you for your ongoing support and guidance as we continue this important journey together. We would not be who we are without you.

As we begin a new year, I leave you with this quote:

“Rural communities are not defined by what they lack, but by the strength, resilience, and care they show for one another.”

- Dr. Nelly Oelke

With best wishes for a healthy and hopeful year ahead,

Only my best

Peggy

Peggy Skelton

President

From the Executive Director

Advocacy, policy and partnerships

Looking Back, and Leaning Forward

As we enter a new year, I am deeply grateful for the resilience and commitment shown by our members, partners, directors, contractors and communities across British Columbia. The past twelve months have highlighted both the challenges facing rural residents and the essential role the BC Rural Health Network plays in ensuring those challenges are heard and addressed.

We continue to see financial pressures placed on non-profits providing essential services, ongoing ER disruptions, travel burdens, long waitlists, inadequate staffing levels and difficulty accessing primary care. At the same time, we are seeing progress. Decision makers are listening more closely, partners are engaging more deeply, and rural communities are stepping forward to help shape solutions.

This year was not only about responding to challenges. It was about building a foundation for the years ahead. We still have much to accomplish, but I am proud of what we achieved in 2025. That progress is the direct result of the generosity of everyone who gives their time, energy, and support.

We continue to operate at a very high level with limited resources. Our board members, committee volunteers, and staff work tirelessly, often behind the scenes, while also balancing commitments to their families and communities. Their dedication is extraordinary, and deeply appreciated.

The year ahead will focus on sustainability. We must ensure our work continues, plan for succession, hire and retain staff, and pay a living wage so that our team can remain strong. Achieving financial stability in 2026 is essential to protecting and growing the impact of our work for rural communities.

Recognition through our first government contract

One important milestone was our recent contract with the provincial government. While the amount is modest, the significance is not. It recognizes the value that rural voices bring to provincial planning and confirms that our Network is a credible partner.

Our goal now is to ensure that genuine rural engagement becomes standard practice in provincial policy work.

Research that centers rural experience

Our work with Dr. Jude Kornelsen remains foundational. Her newest project focuses on ensuring that rural residents are fully included in health research, so that policy decisions reflect lived experience.

CBC recently profiled this work [listen here](#).

Alongside her research, Jude leads our Implementation Committee which continues to bring together community leaders, government partners, clinicians, and researchers. The insights from this work are helping shape primary care reform in rural BC.

We encourage readers to participate in Jude's research. More information is included later in this newsletter.

Primary care reform and the promise of CARGA

Primary care reform remains one of the most important policy opportunities in front of us. Through the CARGA process, we continue to advocate for models that are community governed, team based, and built to reflect rural realities. The second CARGA report signals meaningful potential for a shift in direction within the Ministry of Health.

But a signal is not enough. To translate this promise into real change, we need a firm financial commitment in Budget 2026 that aligns with the recommendations provided to the Ministry team. Only then can we be confident that the system is moving forward with the urgency that rural communities require.

Community Health Centres remain central to that work. Sustainable funding is essential if they are to grow responsibly: <https://bcachc.org/>

We will continue pushing for long term commitment from government.

Appreciating leadership voices

We were honoured to welcome BC Green Party Leader Emily Lowan as our AGM guest speaker. Her thoughtful engagement on health issues and her remarkable energy as a Gen Z leader are already drawing a new cohort into provincial politics, which is an achievement in itself.

Our message to Emily was the same message we continue to share across the political spectrum: rural perspectives must be integral to provincial dialogue and must be embedded in policy development across British Columbia.

Building stability through the Legacy Equity Fund

The Legacy Equity Fund is a deliberate step toward financial stability. Consistent funding helps ensure that we can maintain and grow the team required to support communities, coordinate research, and engage with government.

If you are able, we invite you to support this effort.

[Donate to the Legacy Equity Fund](#)

Your contribution helps strengthen our work and ensures we can continue to speak truth to power, engage with communities, travel, speak to leaders from across BC and remain a free agent that is governed by community champions from across rural BC. We rely on supporter generosity, and we are deeply grateful for any donation you are able to make. As a registered charity, we provide tax receipts for all eligible contributions.

Long term care through a rural lens

Rural communities face distinct long-term care challenges, including centralized institutional models, limited home supports, staffing shortages, and long travel distances. Effective planning must reflect geography, culture, and local realities. One size does not fit all, and any discussion about economies of scale must also recognize the imperative of keeping families and communities together.

Strategies for long-term care must account for the system-wide costs of the current model that concentrates million-dollar beds in urban centres. We need to shift toward integrating long-term care into communities as an anchor resource and a place of care that strengthens local services rather than burdening them.

We will continue to advance this rural-lens approach so that seniors can age in place with dignity, connection, and appropriate supports. We appreciate the work of our [Seniors' Advocate, Dan Levitt](#) and hope to see his voice continue to assist us in raising awareness of the significant inequities faced by rural seniors.

Virtual care: RTVS and standards that work for rural communities

Real-Time Virtual Support remains one of the most effective tools supporting under staffed rural ERs and maternity services. Not all virtual programs deliver the same continuity or relevance. BC needs strong standards that reflect what works for rural residents and providers. It is time to increase our voice on this critical program and ensure that consistent financial supports are in place, that more funding is allocated to this essential program and that expansion of these programs with stable funding is seen as a priority for the Ministry. Budget 2026 will be very telling to where rural health stands as a priority and we will be watching closely, [budget day](#) is February 17th, 2026.

Travel, accommodation, and Housing is Healthcare

For many rural residents, the greatest barrier to treatment is not the medical appointment itself. It is the cost and complexity of travel and accommodation. [Housing is Healthcare](#) remains a core initiative aimed at reducing these inequities and ensuring people can access the care they need. We have had productive discussions with government and positive signals from all political parties regarding travel supports and accommodation access for rural residents. We welcome [Jacqueline Podewils](#) to our board as a liaison and who is both the founder and a leader of this important initiative.

Unfortunately, many essential programs still lack appropriate funding, and others have been reduced or eliminated. Rural residents continue to face unnecessary financial hardship and health risks as a result. We need a clear and sustained commitment to address this issue. The solution is neither impossible nor unaffordable. Providing timely supports will save money across the system, improve health outcomes, and build strong public support for equitable access to care.

Looking ahead

- strengthening our formal partnership role with government
- advancing rural-driven research
- supporting CHC growth and primary care reform
- expanding Housing is Healthcare
- enhancing RTVS advocacy and virtual care standards
- improving long term care planning
- building financial stability through the Legacy Equity Fund

Thank you to everyone who supports, advises, challenges, and works alongside us. Together, we will continue working toward a future where geography never determines who receives care.

Yours in health and wellness,
Paul

Paul Adams
Executive Director

Community Outreach

Voices From Across BC



Hello everyone, I hope you all had a safe, restful, and reflective end of year. My family and I took some time to remind ourselves of our many blessings and to gently prepare our hearts and minds for the year ahead. We have been trying to name at least one thing each day that we are grateful for, as a way to stay grounded and mindful as we move forward. One thing I continue to be deeply grateful for is the opportunity to work with the BC Rural Health Network and to learn alongside so many dedicated and caring people.

The many conversations I had with community members across rural and remote areas last year were truly inspiring and meaningful to me. Hearing firsthand about people's experiences, challenges, and strengths reinforced just how important it is to stay connected and to keep listening. This year, I want to be even more intentional about reaching out, learning more about our rural and remote communities, and creating space for honest and respectful dialogue.

I am especially eager to speak with those who wish to share their experiences and stories, as I believe these voices are essential in helping guide our work and shaping positive change.

My hope for the year ahead is to continue building strong relationships, encouraging participation, and finding ways to bring people together so that our voices can be joined in meaningful and practical ways. By listening, learning, and working together, I believe we can support one another and continue moving toward healthier, more connected rural and remote communities. If you are interested in sharing ideas or lived experiences, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Kind regards:

Dea Lewsaw

Community Outreach Coordinator

dea.lewsaw@bcruralhealth.org

Member of the Month: BC Health Coalition

Provincial leadership in defending public health care

BCH Health Coalition

Our mandate

The [BC Health Coalition \(BCHC\)](#) is a province-wide community of individuals and organizations dedicated to defending and improving public health care in British Columbia. We believe a strong, publicly funded health system should be accessible, equitable, and responsive to all British Columbians. Our partnership with the BC Rural Health Network is essential, as residents in smaller communities and rural areas often bear the brunt of underfunding, demographic changes, and structural challenges within the health care system.

The BCHC Board (Steering Committee) brings together an equal mix of labour and non-labour voices from across public health. We were pleased to have BCRHN staff member Dea Lewsaw of Salmo serve on our Steering Committee in 2024/25, followed by Lorraine Gerwing of Fort Nelson for 2025/26.

care to erode into a two-tier, U.S.-style system, we can engage them to fight for the improvements we need, and safeguard the system we fought for in the days of Tommy Douglas.

This campaign will not be easy. Communities experiencing service gaps are not always eager to defend the system as it exists. But we must avoid throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Protecting our universal, publicly funded system is essential, even while pushing for improvements on multiple fronts.

A history of advocacy

The Coalition has a long history of effective advocacy. In previous years, we intervened in the Cambie Surgeries case to prevent changes to the Canada Health Act, protected BC's public voluntary blood donation system, successfully advocated for the elimination of unfair MSP fees, and supported the creation of the Office of the Seniors Advocate. We also helped secure government commitments to address surgical and diagnostic wait times, ran election campaigns to support public health care champions, and advocated nationally for improvements such as universal Pharmacare.

The BCHC stands strongly against moving toward a two-tier, U.S.-style system. The research is clear: nations that have embraced this approach have longer wait times and reduced access for those in the public system. In Australia, for example, a recent report found cancer patients in the lowest socioeconomic group had a 37 percent higher mortality rate than those in the highest socioeconomic group.

Looking back at 2025

It has been a year of both challenges and victories. The BCHC called on the government for the public reintegration of diagnostic services. We worked with other provincial coalitions to highlight threats from privatization, staffing shortages, and inequities in the system, and celebrated BC's commitment to the national Pharmacare program. Across the province, we held workshops, webinars, and speaker panels to educate communities on health care issues and mobilize support for a stronger public system.



Solidarity with LifeLabs Technicians

In 2025, the provincial health care system continued to face serious pressures, including staffing shortages and the effects of privatization, exemplified by the strike of diagnostic technicians at the corporately owned LifeLabs. As we informed our membership about the unacceptable working conditions there, many were surprised to learn that LifeLabs is a private entity. Over time, governments have increasingly outsourced health care services that would ideally be operated within the public system.

For-profit entities like LifeLabs are accountable to shareholders and must generate a return on investment, even while receiving public funds per patient through MSP. This creates an inherent tension: to remain profitable, such companies may underpay workers, impose excessive workloads, or cut overhead, often at the expense of the quality of care.

delivered. When public dollars flow to private providers, there is a structural risk that patient care and safety can be compromised.

The role of the BCHC in situations involving unionized health care workers is to inform patients and stakeholders and to create opportunities for public solidarity. The working conditions of health care providers are directly tied to the quality of care patients receive. In cases like this, the public deserves to know that profit-driven corporations such as Quest Diagnostics, the owner of LifeLabs, are directly responsible for decisions that erode both working conditions and patient care.

Primary Health Care

Strengthening primary health care delivery remains a key strategy to address system inefficiencies. The BCHC supports team-based, community-rooted models that include physicians, nurse practitioners, allied health professionals, and community health workers. In 2025, Coalition staff and Board members actively participated in the Ministry of Health's engagement process related to the Cooperation and Responsible Government Accord (CARGA), which focuses on primary care reform, ensuring that community needs and patient-centered approaches are at the heart of system changes. The second CARGA report has just been released and we will continue to participate, looking for an opportunity to engage our members should an opportunity for broader political engagement arise.

Members of the Coalition's Steering Committee also engaged directly with the Ministry of Health, offering input on urgent system-wide challenges. Incoming Minister Josie Osborne and her staff consulted with BCHC-affiliated researchers, who outlined the structural drivers of the primary care crisis and its central role in cost overruns and gaps in care, especially for patients with complex and high needs. They stressed that improving outcomes requires a focus on meaningful access to primary care, not just formal attachment, so that people with greater needs can receive timely, high-quality care and avoid reliance on costly and often less effective emergency and hospital services.



Provincial and National Health Coalitions

BCHC collaborates closely with other provincial coalitions and our national counterpart. In 2025, we participated in SOS Medicare 3.0 in Ottawa and the People's Shadow Summit in Huntsville following the federal election. These gatherings brought together advocates, researchers, and frontline workers to strategize for a stronger, more equitable health care system.

Advocating for better care in rural communities

We are well aware that rural communities face unique challenges. Access to timely and comprehensive care is often limited, and geographic distance can affect outcomes. BCHC advocates for strong hospitals and clinics, adequate staffing, telehealth solutions, and fair provincial funding. In partnership with the BC Rural Health Network, we amplify the voices of communities far from urban centres, including highlighting the need for accommodations for patients needing specialized care in Vancouver.

The road ahead

Looking to 2026, BCHC is preparing a major public campaign to defend public health care against privatization. Political leaders across Canada are increasingly opening the door to for-profit models, and we will work with provincial partners to uphold Tommy Douglas's legacy, reminding British Columbians that access to care should be based on need, not wealth.

Our priorities for 2026 remain consistent with 2025: protecting Medicare, improving seniors' care, advocating for patient-centered delivery, and strengthening rural and community-based primary care. By combining advocacy and public education, we mobilize communities to support policies that put patients first, protect public services, and maintain a health care system accessible to everyone, everywhere.

We look forward to continuing our work with the BC Rural Health Network and other partners to advance these priorities and ensure high-quality, publicly funded health care remains at the core of BC's health system.

Learn more at the [BC Health Coalition website](#).

Research and Participation Opportunities

Calls for rural voices



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Faculty of Medicine

Centre for Rural Health Research | Department of Family Practice



Michael Smith
**Health
Research BC**
BC SUPPORT UNIT

Rural Research Inclusion Project

People who live in rural communities are often left out of health research because long travel distances, limited internet connectivity, and fewer local research resources can make it hard to participate. When that happens, research findings and new treatments may not work as well for rural communities.

This project will speak with rural residents and research teams across BC to understand these challenges and identify what would help. What we learn will help guide a provincial plan to make research more accessible, including improvements in technology, training, and long term support for rural research.

Overall, the goal is to make health research fairer and more useful for rural communities.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF YOUTH SEX SERVICES IN BC!

UBC's Sexual Health Evaluation Team and **Options for Sexual Health** have identified sexual health service gaps and inform the design of strengthened youth sexual health services. Our priority focus is on providers and youth living and working in smaller urban and rural BC.

Options for Sexual Health currently operates 30 clinics across BC. As of early 2023, it is seeking funding for the year from the BC Ministry of Health while it undergoes structural changes to ensure sustainable sexual and reproductive health service delivery in BC.

This is a chance for rural and remote youth and providers in BC to share their experiences, access/offer youth sexual health services in their community & shape the future of 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, peer educators, and support workers

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

News and Partner Highlights

Programs and opportunities for rural communities



Youth Pathways Programs



From interactive simulations to hands-on training, our programs provide unique opportunities for youth to explore potential career paths.

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 have ever wondered what it is like to be on the frontlines of health care, responding to crises, and making a real difference in people's lives, this program is a chance to find out.

Here is how students can get involved:

- **Grade 9: A Day in the Life of a Paramedic** – 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.
- **Grades 11 and 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)** – Ride-along shifts, mentorship from paramedics, and hands-on exposure to emergency response.

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 health care, 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 experiences that can set students on the path to a rewarding and impactful career.

You can download the full brochure here: [BCEHS Youth Pathways Program brochure](#).

For more information, visit the [BC Emergency Health Services website](#) or contact Deborah Roberts at (250) 731 7197 or Deborah.roberts@bcehs.ca.

Take the first step toward a career that saves lives. The future of emergency health services in BC starts with you.

Oncology Travel and Supports

If you are an oncology patient or know someone in BC who is, the Canadian Cancer Society and Hope Air offer important services and supports to help ensure people can access the treatment they need. Please visit their websites to learn more.

- 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:

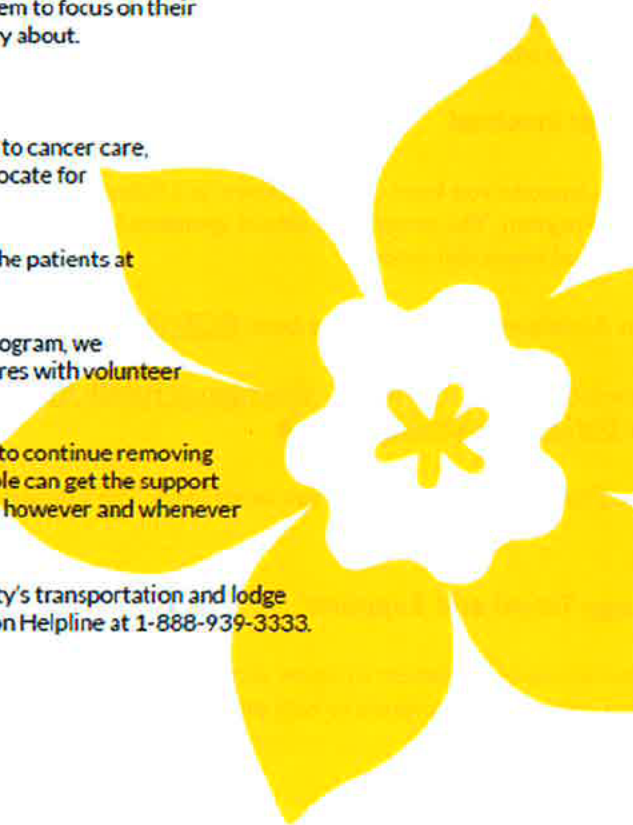
Financial assistance: Grants for travel expenses related to cancer care, including for those who need to travel or temporarily relocate for leukemia/bone marrow transplant

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 or contact the Cancer Information Helpline at 1-888-939-3333.



Travel Assistance with Kindness and Compassion!

Hope Air continues to help British Columbians travel to essential medical care, removing financial barriers and ensuring that distance is not a reason to delay treatment.



PATIENTS \$
APPROX. \$

IN LOST WAGE
TRIP WITH HOPI
SUPPORT



HOPE AID

Growing Together

GREAT PLACES

B.C. COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Happy Holidays & 2026 Theme Info
- New Homes for Anniversary Trees
- Youth in Action Award Wrap-up
- Looking Good!
- Planning for 2026
- Provincial Volunteer Opportunities
- Early Registration Discount Promotion!

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Coordinator Catherine Kennedy

catherine.bccib@gmail.com



Thank you for joining us in 2025



Happy Holidays from the
BC Communities in Bloom Board

Announcing the 2026 Communities in Bloom Theme...Therapeutic Gardening

This year, CiB is recognizing the restorative power of greenspaces - gardens that nurture the mind, body, and spirit. Whether through community food gardens, volunteer-maintained landscapes, or the simple act of tending plants so that others can enjoy them, therapeutic gardening fosters connection, resilience, and well-being.

We sincerely hope you will join us in 2026; to explore why greenspaces can enrich communities, promote well-being, and inspire civic pride across Canada. Your participation is vital to the ongoing success of Communities in Bloom and to celebrate your 'Therapeutic Gardening' achievements.

British Columbia Communities in Bloom offers several participation options for individuals, groups or municipalities. Please go to www.bccib.ca or email catherine.bccib@gmail.com for more information.



BC CiB Anniversary Trees find new homes!

It's exciting to see some of the Anniversary Trees finding a new home in your communities. (PS I love getting your photos!)

Right: Hope CiB planting their Golden Smoke Bush near their new entry sign with Buddy 🟡.

Below: Sicamous's Vine Maple with Anniversary Plaque on a bench.



Right: Kelowna's columnar Liquidambar tree in a new boulevard garden area.



Left: Chase's new Vine Maple with dedication plaque.

Thanks again to Specimen Trees for the donation of the 10-Gallon trees (and in some cases, shrubs). These plants are creating a legacy in many communities around the province.





Youth in Action Bert Pulles Memorial Award

Kerry Bysouth with award envelopes and Bert's family Gracie Pulles (wife), Fred Pulles (son), and some of the Mission CiB team William Elliott and Denyse Tavenar.

Cheques are being awarded to the three Mission winners announce in our [November](#) issue.

Thank you to all involved with this new award initiative. We hope to make the Youth in Action award province wide next year.

LOOKING GOOD!

In October one of our Provincial Ambassadors, Anne Kulla was traveling and saw a couple of worthy **Looking Good!** communities, well done to:

Pemberton

Entry signage with garden.



Enderby

and their lovely passageway gardens.



Planning for 2026

- **2026 Registration Information available now.**
- **Want to know more about CiB?** Info Sessions can be arranged by zoom or in person – contact Catherine.
- **BLOOM (6-Criteria) Early Bird Registration Discount \$100 – Register before January 31.** (see page 5)
- **GROW (3-Criteria) Early Bird Registration Discount \$50 – Register before January 31.** (see page 5)
- **Join our Provincial Team – we are recruiting for 2026 Judge and Board Member positions.**

BC CiB Volunteer Judge

Do you like people and plants? Think horticulture is a critical part of community life and wellness?

BC Communities in Bloom is a not-for-profit organization looking for volunteer judges able to train and evaluate at specific times of the year. New judges are paired with a more experienced partner to evaluate communities all over British Columbia.

Think you might be interested? Contact Catherine Kennedy at catherine.BCCiB@gmail.com to find out more information about the BC Communities in Bloom program or go to www.bccib.ca

Prerequisites:

1. A committed interest in the Communities in Bloom program and all that it represents.
2. Employment experience and/or dedication to horticultural initiatives, with an interest/experience in environmental practices, natural and cultural heritage,

tree/urban forestry, landscaping, or floral displays.

3. Able to attend a judges training session in early spring.
4. Willing to volunteer one week of time in mid-July.
5. Able to travel (driving) throughout the province for the evaluation of communities (lots of walking & talking).
6. Good communication skills and excellent report writing skills. Allow time after tour for completion of reports.
7. Understanding that the time commitment while on tour is intense. Communities expect judges to be available during established tour times and special events.
8. Adaptability to the unexpected and an adventurous spirit is an asset!

BC CiB Volunteer Board Member

Duties: The Board of BC Communities in Bloom is a “working board”.

1. Participate at the meetings of the Board of Directors (mostly by zoom, approx. 6x/year).
2. Participate in the development and promotion of BC CiB’s objectives.
3. Participate in the decision-making process.

Eligibility: A member having two (2) years experience as a member at the provincial level; or

1. A person with experience in an organization associated with, or of relevance to the mission of CiB.

Voting process: Eligible candidates are invited, prior to the AGM, to submit their name on a nomination form.







Please contact Catherine
Catherine.bccib@gmail.com or 604 576-6506



British Columbia Communities in Bloom (BC CiB) was formed as a society to deliver the CiB program and support our volunteers who are specialists in horticulture, parks and recreation and community engagement.

Municipalities from around the province participate in the CiB program to enhance their hometown’s unique potential and celebrate their successes.

2026 PROVINCIAL PROGRAM INFORMATION – www.bccib.ca

EVALUATED OPTIONS - (links to separate form)		AWARDS
	GROW MODIFIED EVALUATION – 3 Criteria Only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For first time, smaller or returning municipalities who want a simpler CiB option. Participants may choose any 3 criteria to be evaluated OR choose a theme. Host a pair of judges. (shortened tour day) – see additional details for more info. <p>ENHANCEMENT: Community Appearance Landscape Areas Plant & Floral Displays</p> <p>CONSERVATION: Environmental Action Heritage Conservation Tree Management</p>	Awarding Certificate and Report with no Bloom Rating Eligible to Win a Criteria Award*
	 BLOOM FULL EVALUATION – all 6 Criteria. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to all Municipalities wanting the full program experience and its many benefits. Gain social value from the community involvement elements of the program. 5-Bloom Winners receive special recognition. Future entry point for National and International Communities in Bloom competition. Host a pair of judges. (2-hr first day, 7-hr tour day) <p>EVALUATION CRITERIA: Community Appearance Environmental Action Heritage Conservation Tree Management Landscape Areas Plant & Floral Displays</p>	Awarding Blooms  Eligible to Win a Criteria Award* Or Outstanding Community Involvement Trophy
<p>*SPONSORED CRITERIA AWARDS recognize outstanding achievement in specific evaluation criteria or to encourage communities working towards 5-Blooms. British Columbia Communities in Bloom values its relationship with our sponsors; we thank them for their support.</p>		
COMMUNITY RECEIVES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting Started Package of Information. Evaluation by a pair of trained BC CiB Judges. Evaluation Report with Comments & Suggestions. Rating Certificate (Blooms only for full evaluated program). 5-Bloom Winners receive special recognition. Profile on newsletter, press releases, www.bccib.ca website and Gardens BC tourism website. 	PROGRAM BENEFITS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthens community pride for residents and businesses Collaborative, creates opportunities to celebrate volunteers Enhances enjoyment and value of green spaces Highlights climate action initiatives Contributes to a healthy social & economic lifestyle Profile for best features of the Community Measurable results with year over year benefits 	
ADDITIONAL DETAILS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow a local 'in Bloom' committee to build collaboration with residents, businesses, service clubs and a municipal rep. (Councillor, Public Works, Administration or Parks & Recreation staff). Plan to meet online mid-season with Provincial CiB Judges with a Virtual Check Up on how to support your CiB efforts. Develop a basic budget to cover registration fee and to create community wide CiB awareness projects, i.e.: parades, tidy up days. Consider planning some fundraising events too. Document volunteer contributions. Create a Community Profile Document to capture components judges may not see in person. Plan a judge's tour to view community in the 3 or 6 evaluation criteria. (Once registered, additional information is provided in the Getting Started Package). Host 2-judges in 2nd week of July (TBC), in separate rooms (Hotel, B&B or Billeting if certain conditions can be met), with meals during evaluation day. Expect to host two nights minimum, some factors will necessitate +/- night and will be determined asap. Communities will be presented a Certificate and a Report at the Provincial Awards in the fall. (Event details to be confirmed) Evaluating three or six criteria, the report creates a benchmark score to celebrate successes and for future improvements. 		
NON-EVALUATED OPTIONS - (links to separate form)		
 FRIENDS For communities that want recognition for ongoing CiB initiatives but want to take time off from evaluation. (see form front) Bonus: this category is encouraged to provide a Showcase.	 MEMBERSHIP (requires separate form) – The BC CiB organization represents all areas of the province, if you would like more information go to our website's Volunteer page.	 (links to separate form)



British Columbia
Communities in Bloom

**Early Registration Discount
DEADLINE January 31, 2026**

BC Communities in Bloom 2026 PROVINCIAL EDITION REGISTRATION FORM

MUNICIPALITY (PLEASE PRINT)	TOTAL POPULATION	MAYOR
NAME OF MUNICIPAL CONTACT	POSITION / TITLE	
ADDRESS	CITY	POSTAL CODE
()		
PHONE	MUNICIPAL CONTACT EMAIL	
NAME OF COMMUNITY CONTACT OR LOCAL CIB CHAIR	WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR COMMUNITY	
()		
PHONE	COMMUNITY CONTACT/CHAIR E-MAIL	
PROGRAM OPTIONS (indicate your level of participation)		
REGISTRATION FEE Based on Population Size:		
<input type="checkbox"/> GROW - MODIFIED EVALUATION 3-Criteria Results are based on an in-person evaluation. Community is awarded a Certificate and Report. <i>See page 2 for more details.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Up to 1000 - \$ 375 <input type="checkbox"/> 1001 to 2000 - \$ 450 <input type="checkbox"/> 2001 to 5000 - \$ 500 <input type="checkbox"/> 5001 to 10,000 - \$ 600 (Plus 5% GST)	<input type="checkbox"/> 10,001 to 20,000 - \$ 700 <input type="checkbox"/> 20,001 to 50,000 - \$ 800 <input type="checkbox"/> 50,001 to 100,000 - \$ 925 <input type="checkbox"/> 100,000+ - \$1150 (Plus 5% GST)
<input type="checkbox"/> BLOOM - FULL EVALUATION 6-Criteria Results are based on an in-person evaluation. Community is awarded a BLOOM RATING and 18-page Report. <i>See page 2 for Awards and more details.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Up to 1000 - \$ 500 <input type="checkbox"/> 1001 to 2000 - \$ 600 <input type="checkbox"/> 2001 to 5000 - \$ 675 <input type="checkbox"/> 5001 to 10,000 - \$ 800 (Plus 5% GST)	<input type="checkbox"/> 10,001 to 20,000 - \$ 925 <input type="checkbox"/> 20,001 to 50,000 - \$1025 <input type="checkbox"/> 50,001 to 100,000 - \$1225 <input type="checkbox"/> 100,000+ - \$1525 (Plus 5% GST)
<input type="checkbox"/> EARLY REGISTRATION DISCOUNT - BLOOM less \$100 and GROW less \$50 on above Fees. Completed Form must be received by January 31/26. (Request invoice or send cheque, <u>online credit card payment</u> cannot be discounted.)		
AMOUNT ENCLOSED	Population Fee _____ less Early Reg Discount _____ + 5% GST ____ = \$	
PLEASE INVOICE US AT	○ Above Address or	
MAIL FORM & FEE TO	BC Communities in Bloom c/o 4451 212 Street, Langley, BC V3A 7Z8 ← Please note updated mailing info	
CANCELLATION POLICY	Before May 30th a \$50.00 fee may be charged, after that, all registration fees are non-refundable.	
CONTACT	Catherine Kennedy, Executive Director catherine.bccib@gmail.com (604) 576-6506 www.bccib.ca	

The BC Communities in Bloom program provides a proven process to help municipalities inspire their residents and businesses around a positive message of 'Growing Great Places Together'.








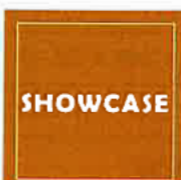
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<p>Photo disclaimer: Submitted photos give authorization to BC Communities in Bloom to use at their discretion for program promotion.</p>					