



November 26, 2020

Honourable Adrian Dix
Minister of Health
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Dix:

Thank you for agreeing to serve British Columbians as Minister of Health and Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs. You are taking on this responsibility at a time when people in our province face significant challenges as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has turned the lives of British Columbians upside down. None of us expected to face the challenges of the past number of months, yet British Columbians have demonstrated incredible resilience, time and time again. We will get through the pandemic and its aftereffects by building on this resilience and focusing on what matters most to people.

British Columbians voted for a government focused on their priorities: fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, providing better health care for people and families, delivering affordability and security in our communities, and investing in good jobs and livelihoods in a clean-energy future.

I expect you – and the work of your ministry – to focus on the commitments detailed in our platform, *Working for You*, along with the following foundational principles:

- **Putting people first:** Since 2017, our government has focused on making decisions to meet people's needs. That focus drove our work in our first term and will continue to be our priority. British Columbians are counting on the government to keep them safe and to build an economic recovery that works for everyone, not just those at the top. Keeping people at the centre of everything we do means protecting and enhancing the public services people rely on and working to make life more affordable for everyone.
- **Lasting and meaningful reconciliation:** Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility for us all. The unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was a significant step forward in this journey. True

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reconciliation will take time and ongoing commitment to work with Indigenous peoples as they move toward self-determination. Our government – and every ministry – must remain focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be full partners in our economy and providing a clear and sustainable path for everyone to work toward lasting reconciliation.

- **Equity and anti-racism:** Our province's history, identity and strength are rooted in its diverse population. Yet racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in their communities, workplaces, government and their lives. Our government has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic discrimination in all its forms – and every ministry has a role in this work. While our caucus elected a record number of women, more work remains to address gender equity. Delivering on our commitments to address racial discrimination will require a commitment by all of government to ensure increased IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) representation within the public service, including in government appointments. Our efforts to address systemic discrimination must also inform policy and budget decisions by reviewing all decisions through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens.
- **A better future through fighting climate change:** In 2018, our government launched our CleanBC climate action plan. CleanBC puts British Columbia on the path to a cleaner, better future by building a low-carbon economy with new clean-energy jobs and opportunities, protecting our air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts. It is every Minister's responsibility to ensure your ministry's work continues to achieve CleanBC's goals.
- **A strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone:** We will continue our work to support British Columbians through the pandemic and the economic recovery by investing in health care, getting people back to work, helping businesses and communities, and building the clean, innovative economy of the future. Our plan will train the workforce of tomorrow, help businesses hire and grow and invest in the infrastructure needed to build our province.

The pandemic has reminded us that we're strongest when we work together. Delivering on our commitments to people will require a coordinated effort with your cabinet and caucus colleagues, supported by the skilled professionals in the public service. You will also support your cabinet colleagues to do their work, particularly where commitments cross ministry lines.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the broader public good despite their partisan perspectives. That means seeking out, fostering and championing good ideas, regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships through public and stakeholder engagement plans that connect with people to incorporate their perspectives early in the policy development process. These plans must include measurable outcomes and ensure active dialogue and ongoing outreach in your ministry's actions and priorities.

Over the course of our mandate, I expect you will make progress on the following items:

- Continue your work with the Provincial Health Officer to control and eliminate the spread of COVID-19 in B.C., keep people safe and protect seniors, and prepare our province for any future pandemic, with state-of-the-art testing, contact tracing, and hospital management procedures and technology.
- Ensure the COVID-19 fall and winter preparedness plan is implemented successfully, including providing at least 2 million doses of flu vaccines, expanding e-health and tele-health, and providing a new Hospital at Home program so patients can get safe care while in the comfort of their homes.
- Once a vaccine is approved and available, provide free COVID-19 vaccinations to every British Columbian.
- Move forward a staffing retention strategy that provides workers in long-term care and assisted living with “levelled up wages” even after the pandemic ends, and restore provincial standards for wages, benefits, and working conditions.
- Work toward eliminating multi-bed rooms in health authority-owned long-term care facilities, giving seniors more dignity.
- Support delivery of better care to seniors by private operators of long-term care homes by making them more accountable for the public funding they receive.
- Improve and expand publicly funded home care to provide better care and help with daily living so that people can stay in their own homes for as long as is safely possible, receiving care from a more stable group of care aides.
- Deliver more Urgent and Primary Care Centres and additional Primary Care Networks across B.C.
- Work with rural and Indigenous communities to ensure the success of our rural collaborative framework to deliver more immediate and culturally safe care closer to home.
- Build and modernize hospitals across British Columbia.
- Where possible and appropriate, transition long-term care aides, housekeeping, and dietary hospital workers back into the public health care system.
- Seek to further reduce wait times by optimizing surgical and diagnostic space and teams, and add additional MRI scanners where they are needed most, so B.C. can keep pace with the demand for new surgeries and diagnostic scans.
- Make British Columbia a leader in the full continuum of cancer care by launching a 10-year cancer action plan.

- Implement a comprehensive health care human resources strategy, expanding training in all fields of health care and improving the province's credential recognition process and licensing so that people trained in other countries can more quickly and easily provide their skills and knowledge here in B.C.
- Make prescription contraception free for all.
- Fight for a national pharmacare program while enhancing Fair Pharmacare by continually reviewing cost thresholds and drug eligibility with the goal of bringing the cost of prescription drugs down.
- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives, draw from the work of the independent investigation into systemic Indigenous-specific racism in health care in B.C. to address systemic racism in the health care system, including by leading work with health employers and unions to prioritize the hiring of a health care workforce that better represents the diverse communities it serves.
- Support the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training to launch B.C.'s second medical school to expand our health care workforce.
- Support the work of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to improve B.C.'s response to the opioid crisis across the full continuum of care: prevention, harm reduction, safe prescription medications, treatment and recovery, including transferring the oversight of recovery homes and other private treatment providers to the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions.
- Support the work of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to provide an increased level of support – including more access to nurses and psychiatrists – for B.C.'s most vulnerable by developing Complex Care housing.
- Support the work of the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including those living in encampments.

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

- Support the Minister of Health's work to hire 7,000 new health care workers in long-term care and assisted living, ensuring the Health Career Access Program provides quality care for seniors and new opportunities for workers who lost their jobs in other sectors due to COVID-19.
- Engage non-profit providers to support the Minister of Health in our government's plan to build more public care homes, including new public beds, to keep seniors safer, healthier and more comfortable.

- With support from the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, lead work with community groups and the B.C. Seniors Advocate to develop a made-in-B.C. Silver Alert system to help assist first responders in locating missing seniors, particularly those with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

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

All cabinet members are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* and conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity. As a minister of the Crown, your conduct will reflect not only on you but on cabinet and our government. You are responsible for providing strong, professional and ethical leadership within cabinet and your ministry. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your deputy minister and the public servants under their direction who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. You must ensure your minister's office meets the highest standards for integrity and provides a respectful and rewarding environment for all staff.

My commitment to all British Columbians is to do my level best to make sure people's lives are better, safer and more affordable. I believe the challenges we face can and will be overcome by working together. By way of this letter, I am expressing my faith that people can expect the same commitment from you.

Sincerely,



John Horgan
Premier