



APR 20 2023

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Via email: [Chair@rdco.com](mailto:Chair@rdco.com)

Loyal Wooldridge  
Chairperson  
Office of the Chair  
Regional District of Central Okanagan  
1450 K.L.O. Rd  
Kelowna BC V1W 3Z4

Dear Loyal Wooldridge:

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Thank you for your letter of February 23, 2023, regarding emergency health services in the Central Okanagan.

I appreciate your advocacy for your community and the time you have taken to share your concerns with the Ministry. It is important to us that patients feel supported in each step of an emergency response.

I was pleased to learn that you recently met with Amir Allana, Area Manager, BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS). I understand that this meeting provided an opportunity for you to discuss your concerns, and for BCEHS to share some details about the actions they are taking to stabilize and strengthen ambulance services throughout the province, including in your community.

As Amir may have mentioned, in 2021, BCEHS added over 530 permanent regular full-time paramedic positions, over 70 permanent irregular full-time positions, and 42 full-time dispatch positions. In addition, in November 2022, BCEHS added over 220 permanent new full-time regular paramedic positions and in December 2022, they announced another 190 permanent full-time primary care paramedic and emergency medical responder positions that have started to be added to the system.

Regarding ambulances responding to calls from outside their community, it is important to note that BCEHS is a provincial service not limited by municipal boundaries. They use a system of cross-covering from other nearby stations if an ambulance is unstaffed or unavailable.

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In order to provide care as quickly as possible in life-threatening calls, BCEHS notifies first responders (FRs), who are, in most instances, fire FRs who provide critical first aid such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation while paramedics are enroute. The support FRs provide during medical emergencies is an essential part of the delivery of emergency health services to people in BC.

On the note of FRs, the Ministry, in collaboration with BCEHS, fire departments, municipalities, and other organizations, is working to improve out-of-hospital care that best serves people living in both urban and rural areas of the province. In May to June 2022, a consultation process took place with local government and FRs to discuss a move-forward approach to develop a standardized agreement that will support first responders to provide out-of-hospital, patient-centred care for people in BC.

Thank you again for writing. I encourage you to continue your dialogue with Amir and to include them in any community meetings where additional information from BCEHS may be required. For easy reference, Amir can be reached at [REDACTED].

The Ministry of Health and BCEHS remain committed to ensuring that people throughout the province have access to emergency out-of-hospital care where and when they need it.

Sincerely,



Adrian Dix  
Minister

pc: Amir Allana, Area Manager, BCEHS