

Dr. Victoria Lee
Suite 400, Central City Tower
13450 – 102nd Avenue,
Surrey, BC V3T 0H1

Dear Ms. Lee:

I am writing to you today to express my serious concerns regarding the deteriorating conditions in the Abbotsford Regional Hospital's emergency department. As you are well aware, the ARH ER is no stranger to high admission numbers, overcrowding, high acuity patients, and chronic short staffing. In fact, this isn't the first time I've written directly to Fraser Health Authority executives about the ongoing challenges at this particular worksite.

As I have stated before, the BC Nurses' Union is ready and willing to work with you to address the ongoing recruitment and retention issues that exist in Abbotsford and across the entire Fraser Health Authority. Something needs to be done to alleviate the moral distress of our nurses, who are working to provide the best care they can, under extremely stressful conditions.

As a nurse myself, it is very upsetting to hear of the chaotic scenes that are occurring daily in the ARH emergency department. The multiple vacant lines, dozens of hallway patients and lack of safety measures are causing many of our nurses to burn out, and some cases, threaten to leave the profession altogether.

On September 13, BCNU's elected chair for the Fraser Valley, Tracey Greenberg, attended the provincial government's announcement of the ARH ER expansion, where he asked Minister Dix about his plans to address the staffing crisis at the hospital. Unfortunately, the minister couldn't provide a clear answer.

We continue to hear of the government's promises to build new health facilities in communities across the province. However, the absence of any HR plan to address the critical staffing shortages that exist almost everywhere is deeply concerning.

I am calling on you, Ms. Lee, to sit down with us and explore how we can work together to best address this crisis at Abbotsford Regional Hospital. Your managers deserve this. Our nurses deserve this. Our patients deserve this.

I'd also like you to consider joining me on a scheduled visit to the ARH ER in early October, when I plan to meet with nurses in person and listen to their concerns before addressing the media.

Sincerely,



Christine Sorensen
President, BC Nurses' Union

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