

Excellent health and care, for everyone,
everywhere, every time.



April 2, 2019

Dear Mayor Cameron and members of the Port Alice Health Forum;

Thank you for the opportunity to meet on Monday, March 25th and discuss next steps with respect to health service planning in Port Alice. Our discussion and your feedback, as well as recent input received from other community members has been invaluable in informing how to best continue serving residents of Port Alice.

When we met, we discussed the ongoing challenges of maintaining physician services in the Port Alice with physicians who do not reside in the community. Though there has been a contract in place that allows for seven day a week coverage, physicians have been working primarily Monday to Friday for a number of years. This has meant Port Alice has been receiving on call services primarily during the week, with variable weekend on call services.

As requested during the public forum on February 20th, Island Health reviewed the past 3 years of utilization of the Urgent Care Centre resources as well as at the times Port Alice residents travelled out of town to access urgent hospital services in Port McNeill or Port Hardy. This review deepened our understanding of how and when Port Alice residents use these services, and I appreciated the opportunity to discuss the data when we met. It showed that physician presence in Port Alice and day of week were not significant factors in residents accessing these services outside the community. In addition, over the past year there were less than seven admissions of Port Alice residents to Port McNeill and Port Hardy Hospitals on evenings, nights and weekends.

As acknowledged last week, I understand the desire of many Port Alice residents to have local care providers available 24/7 in the event of a sudden illness. However, as mentioned above, there is a very small demand for these types of services and it has become increasingly difficult to find physicians who are willing to work consistently in the community outside of weekdays. We also discussed the limitations of having a nurse on call, the safety risks of a sole care provider working alone and the ongoing availability of BC Ambulance Services (BCAS) 24/7.

Island Health is committed to continuing to support excellent health and care in Port Alice. During our meeting, I confirmed the following with respect to ongoing health services in Port Alice:

- Continuation of the existing 0.8 FTE physician contract, including the on-call provisions. This includes Monday through Thursday day time urgent and primary care services as well as after-hours urgent care calls;
- A registered nurse will be scheduled seven days per week to support urgent, primary and community care;
- The new social worker position will become permanent;
- Seven day per week home support services will be maintained;

- Adult Day Programming will be implemented; and
- Exploration of feasibility of a bathing program at the Health Centre will occur.

The urgent care room at the Health Centre will remain, and the facility will not be altered to support a bathing program without community consultation and agreement. The wheelchair accessible washroom and the automatic doors to the Health Center have been scheduled to be completed.

Service hours of the Health Center will be as follows:

Service	Availability
Primary Care	
RN	Monday-Sunday Daytime
GP	Monday-Thursday 0830-1630
Urgent Care	
GP On Call Services	Monday-Thursday 0830-1630
	Monday-Thursday 1630-0830

In follow up to these discussions and commitments, Alison Mitchell will be working with the Health Centre staff as well as the Health Forum leadership to come to an agreed upon model of care. Island Health feels strongly about supporting staff to be able to work in a safe and effective way. Alison will formally communicate details of this model to Mayor Cameron and Valerie Eyford of the Health Forum.

I look forward to your feedback on this communication. It is very important to me that residents of Port Alice are fully informed about our conversations, the agreed upon service delivery model and the resources available to them. I look forward to working with you to this end.

Thank you for your time last week and your input into Port Alice health services planning,

Sincerely,



Vice President
Clinical Service Delivery

cc: Alison Mitchell, Director, Mt. Waddington and Strathcona
Dermot Kelly, Executive Director, Geography 1
Dr. Jennifer Grace, Executive Medical Director, Geography 1