



City of Pitt Meadows

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

May 26, 2014

Honourable Terry Lake
Minister of Health
Room 337, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Lake,

Re: BCEHS Resource Allocation Plan

Recent changes within the British Columbia Emergency Health Services and BC Ambulance Service have highlighted a systemic and long-standing shortfall in the number of BC Ambulance resources province-wide. There is a critical shortage of both ambulances and trained paramedics to staff them.

The Resource Allocation Plan (RAP) modifications instituted in fall 2013 have impacted the citizens of BC. However, it is only the most recent example of the Province trying to extract more work out of an exceedingly saturated system. Local Government has for too long propped up the inadequate resource levels of BC Ambulance through use of local first responder resources; primarily firefighters. While it is recognized and applauded that emergency (Code 3) response times have improved, it is also a fact that times for ambulances to attend to other less critical patients have lengthened, sometimes to entirely unacceptable periods of time. This “give and take” type of methodology does not serve the citizens appropriately.

It is a fact that BC Ambulance resource levels have not been enhanced to meet the rapid growth in call volume since the late 1990's. It is also a fact that ongoing ambulance delays at hospitals are further lengthening ambulance response times to citizens. The hospital wait issue has existed for over 20 years with very little change and it is not going away.

Paramedics, dispatchers, BC Ambulance management and virtually every other citizen in the Province explicitly recognize the problem – we need more paramedics and ambulances on the road immediately. It is incumbent on the Province to meet the expectations of their Legislation to provide effective and efficient ambulance services to the citizens of BC. The BC Ambulance is not meeting that mandate in any reasonable fashion.

The solution is not to rely upon first responders or to facilitate local government doing more. The Province has tried many “fixes” to improve ambulance response capability for many years with no success. The RAP is only the latest example. It is time to put health care first and properly fund and resource the BC Ambulance Service as a critical public safety agency.

Yours truly,



Deb Walters
Mayor

cc: Doug Bing, MLA
UBCM Member Municipalities