

March 18, 2025

Dear Director Lenard Heibert,

I hope this letter finds you well. On behalf of Northern Health's President and CEO, Ciro Panessa, I am addressing the information requested during our March 6, 2025, meeting about the Peace River Regional District (PRRD).

The meeting's discussions are crucial to improving health services and community well-being in the region. Below is the information on senior's care, the United Way, recruitment and retention, and advocacy opportunities for municipalities in Northeast regarding health.

In Dawson Creek, two Societies, Dawson Creek Community Living Society (DCCLS) and South Peace Community Resources Society (SPCRS), provide various services. DCCLS gets funding from the Peace River Regional District for a meals program, housekeeping, handyman services, and snow removal in rural South Peace communities. SPCRS receives United Way funding for Better at Home and a Community Connector serving Dawson Creek and nearby areas, excluding Pouce Coupe.

The funds from Peace River Regional District to DCCLS are significant, covering high service costs such as \$30 per meal due to remote delivery expenses. Conversations between DCCLS and United Way indicate that current funding levels cannot be matched by Better at Home. We would welcome on-going dialogue between PRRD, DCCLS, SPCRS, and the United Way to find a way forward.

On matters of recruitment, NH has connected with 890 Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals (IEHPs), including 240 nurses in northern BC. NH provides registration information, refers IEHPs to support agencies, and encourages job applications. NH also covers certain assessment and travel costs for IEN credentialing based on a Return of Service Agreement.

NH has hired 159 Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals (IEHPs), with 51 placed in the NE area, including roles such as RNs, LPNs, Care Aides, and non-clinical positions. Health care training programs are available only to Permanent Residents and Canadians, but NH is advocating for access for those on work permits.

There are a total of 24 IENs working in direct care roles, including RNs, LPNs, Care Aides and Social Services Assistants. There are 7 IENs in non-clinical roles as well (nursing unit or registration clerks, food services workers, and housekeepers. Other participants in the program include medical lab, human resources, and rehab assistants, rehab aides, and life skills workers. IEHPs are also fulfilling housing coordinator, primary care assistant and social services assistant roles in the North.

Northern Lights College (NLC) is consulting on expanding health care training programs matching NH needs in areas like Pharmacy Tech and Mental Health Support. NH's vacancy rate recently fell below 20% and continued Rural Recruitment Incentives would aid recruitment and retention.

Please feel free to reach out for connection around these and other items that may come to mind in the future. We appreciate the partnership and the dialogue.

Sincerely,



Northeast Senior Operating Officer

cc: Ciro Panessa, NH CEO
cc: Lisa Zetes-Zanatta, NH VP Clinical Operations
cc: Steve Raper, NH Director Communications