

Subject: [Fwd: Proposed Cuts to North Shore Health Care Services & new Provincial appointees to Boards]

Date: Sat, 23 Mar 2002 14:37:09 -0800

From: Brian Platts <brian_platts@telus.net>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: Proposed Cuts to North Shore Health Care Services & new Provincial appointees to Boards

Date: Fri, 22 Mar 2002 18:53:23 -0800

From: Don Bell <mayorbell@district.north-van.bc.ca>

To: Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@district.north-van.bc.ca>

CC: "fonvca@fonvca.org" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

Dear Council,

I wish to advise you of recent matters relating to proposed cuts to the provision of Health Care Services on the North Shore, and that I will be bringing an initial report with recommendations for actions by Council to a Regular meeting of Council no later than Tuesday, April 2nd, 2002.

The Provincial Government today also announced appointments to the new Provincial Health Services Authority Board, and to the regional Vancouver Coastal Health Authority Board (includes the North Shore and Coast Garibaldi). Of interest is the appointment of Keith Purchase as Chair, and Naomi Yamamoto as member, both of whom are North Shore residents.

BACKGROUND

Yesterday, Mayor Sharp and I met with the Debra McPherson, President of the B.C. Nurses Union, and with the union's Communication Officer at their invitation where they presented us with a purported copy of the North Shore/Coast Garibaldi Health Region's Health Service Redesign Plan Summary. Ms. McPherson advised that they were planning a news conference today to release this information and to express their concern about the impact of the cuts on our community. Mayor Sharp and I agreed that the information was of such importance that we should schedule a meeting between the three north shore mayors and our three Provincial M.L.A.'s as soon as possible to clarify the information.

I followed up with a call to North Shore/Coast Garibaldi Health Services CEO Ellen Pekeles, who stated that no documents of this type had yet been released, but that it sounded similar to one of several options her Authority had prepared to comply with a Provincial Government request for a Plan Summary about how cost cutting could be accommodated in keeping with recent Provincial Government budget directives. As a result of this conversation I am inclined to believe that this is a genuine document. Ms. Pekeles indicated that she had given a very general "heads up" of coming challenges during her attendance at the recent North Shore Congress meeting which was attended by members of the North Shore Councils.

The meeting with MLA's occurred today in Hon. Kathryn Whittred's North Shore office with M.L.A.'s Jarvis, Sultan and Whittred plus Mayors Bell, Sharp &

Wood in attendance. The M.L.A.s were not aware of the specifics outlined in the Health Service Redesign Plan Summary and we have all agreed to try and get more clarification of what is proposed.

THE REPORT

The report's recommendations are quite frankly shocking, and if implemented fully, will in my opinion have a very negative impact on the quality of health care to our residents.

I would recommend you read the documents for yourselves, attachments listed below, but I will highlight a few of the main concerns that jump out immediately:

1) 2002/2003

- Closure of 4 of 16 present Palliative Care beds at Lions Gate Hospital (LGH).
- OR Night staff reductions at LGH
- Medical/surgical staff reductions at LGH
- Closure of 3 CCU beds at LGH
- De-listing of LGH outpatient Rehab services
- Discontinuation of Community Grants to Community Care groups and agencies.
- Discontinuation of Mental Health community grants and contracts that do not provide housing.
- Reduction of School Health nursing.

2) 2003/2004

- Convert 150 ICU facility beds to 120 Assisted Living units.
- Decommission 217 Continuing Care Residential beds.

RECOMMENDATION

I would strongly recommend you read the accompanying "Comments on Key Strategies/Financial Impact", "Quality and Workload Impact", "Non-Financial Barriers to Implementation", and most importantly the last set of comments titled "Risks". The notations and underlining on the various pages are mine.

The bottom line is that while we all appreciate the problems the Provincial Government has with rising health care costs, what is being proposed will reduce the North Shore from having one of the finest health regions in the province, to being just one of the pack, and at a level which may not meet the needs of our residents.

The cuts are particularly galling in that they seem to target community based programs which have gone a long way to reducing costs of health care, and to target the schools, our aging population, and those terminal cases requiring appropriate Palliative Care. One statement in the report regarding Mental Health services seems to summarize these concerns, "Aside from permanent damage to the individual, this increases the cost of care in the community and in future hospital admissions".

The attachment below includes all the papers referred to in this report.
They open one page at a time, so please pay attention to the page number at
the bottom of the attachment. There are 10 pages in total.

Mayor Don Bell

(I have cc'd FONVCA because of the seriousness of the matter and that all
the information is now in public hands)

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