

## Meeting Note

### Advice to Parliamentary Secretary Andrew Mercier

**Date:** April 20, 2021

**Cliff #:** 121205

**Prepared for:** Andrew Mercier, Parliamentary Secretary for Skills Training

**Date, Time of Meeting and Location:**

- April 22, 2021; 3:15PM - 3:45PM

**Attendees:**

Jamie Matten, Director, Health Science Association of BC (HSA)

**Issue:** Ongoing challenges with training opportunities for health science professionals.

**Background:**

- The Health Sciences Association of BC (HSA) represents more than 18,000 health science professionals across the province in a variety of practice settings including hospitals, long-term care facilities, and child development centres and transition houses.
- HSA represents workers in several allied health professions (see Appendix 1) such as physical and occupational therapists, sonographers, dietitians, social workers, and medical laboratory technicians.
- HSA also represents approximately 900 nurses, largely Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) and is a member of the Nurses Bargaining Association alongside the British Columbia Nurses Union (BCNU).
- The 2019 British Columbia Labour Market Outlook (LMO) projects that the Health Care and Social Assistance sector will see the largest increase in job openings over the next 10 years, accounting for 1/6 of total job openings.
- The LMO projects more than 141,000 job openings in this sector, with more than 40% of these openings expected to be net-new positions arising from expansions of the health care system driven by the growing medical needs of an aging population.
- HSA has also requested a meeting with the Honourable Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training. The meeting is scheduled for June 30, 2021.

**Discussion:**

- Government currently provides funding for 5904 targeted Allied Health full-time equivalent spaces (FTEs) each year at public post-secondary institutions across the province.
- Since 2017, Government has announced funding for several new Allied Health program expansions, including:
  - A new Diagnostic Medical Sonography program at the College of New Caledonia in Prince George - Northern B.C.'s first.
  - New funding to Thompson Rivers University for 20 fast-track Respiratory Therapy seats.
  - A new Diagnostic Medical Sonography program at Camosun College in Victoria - Vancouver Island's first.

- An expanded Master of Physiotherapy North program through UBC, in partnership with UNBC, in Prince George.
- A new Master of Occupational Therapy Northern Cohort at UBC, with expansion to Prince George planned for 2022.
- Budget 2021 includes \$96 million over three years for new training spaces to continue to build a workforce to increase health sector capacity, including training for participants of the Health Career Access Program.
- Plans for allied health program expansion will be developed according to needs identified by the Ministry of Health, and will include priorities identified by HAS including Medical Laboratory Technologist training seats.
- The Ministry of Health, HSA, and Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) have established The Health Sciences Professionals Bargaining Association Recruitment and Retention Working Group (HSPBARR WG).

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**Suggested Response / Key Message:**

- We recognize the critical role that health science professionals play in protecting the health and welfare of B.C.'s residents.
- AEST works collaboratively with the Ministry of Health to ensure funding for health education seats is aligned with demand in communities across the province.
- Many factors influence the expansion of these programs and we need to ensure we're balancing the competing priorities of our entire post-secondary system and continuing to provide a high-quality education and training.
- I'm pleased to say AEST has been able to respond to changing workforce demands and increase the number of B.C. students enrolled in health care programs across the province.
- We will continue creating new training opportunities for allied health professionals by delivering on commitments outlined in Budget 2021.
- I encourage you to continue working with the Ministry of Health and HEABC on these issues through the HSPBARR Working Group.

**Attachment(s):** *Appendix 1 – HAS Member Professions*

**Contact:** *Nicola Lemmer, Assistant Deputy Minister, 778-698-9768*

## Appendix 1: HSA Member Professions

- Anesthesia Assistants\*
- Audiologists
- Biomedical Engineering Technologists
- Cardiology Technologists
- Cardiology Technologists
- Cardiopulmonary Technologists
- Child Life Specialists
- Clinical Counsellors, Rehabilitation Counsellors, And Counselling Therapists
- Clinical Exercise Specialists
- Clinical Perfusionists\*
- Counsellors
- Diagnostic Medical Sonographers\*
- Early Childhood Educators
- Electroneurophysiology (Enp) Technologists Including:
  - Electroencephalography (Eeg)
  - Electromyography (Emg)
  - Evoked Potentials (Ep)
  - Electronystagmography (Eng) And Polysomnography
- Health Records Administrators
- Health Records Administrators
- Infant Development (Idp) Consultants
- Medical Imaging Technologists:
  - Medical Radiation Technologists
  - Nuclear Medicine Technologists
  - Radiation Therapists\*
  - Magnetic Resonance Technologists\*
- Medical Laboratory Technologists\*
- Music Therapists
- Occupational Therapists\*
- Orthotists
- Pharmacists\*
- Physiotherapists\*
- Preschool Teachers
- Prosthetists
- Psychologists
- Psychometrists
- Radiation Therapy Service Technologist\*
- Recreation Therapists
- Registered Dietitians\*
- Respiratory Therapists\*
- Social Worker\*
- Speech Language Pathologists\*
- Supported Child Care Consultants
- Vocational Counsellors

\* Indicates priority allied health professional as identified in the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association Recruitment and Retention Working Group

**The Tipping Point:  
Shortage of Health Science Professionals in Public Health Care**

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