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Dr. Darryl Plecas
Parliamentary Secretary to the
Minister of Health for Seniors
East Annex
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Dear Dr. Plecas:

I wish to congratulate you on your appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health for Seniors. I look forward to working with you to advance the strategies and actions that our government has set out to improve the quality of life and health services for seniors in our province.

A core focus of our government's work to support seniors is promoting healthy, active aging and helping seniors remain independent in their own homes and communities for as long as they can safely do so. This work aligns with the Ministry of Health's (Ministry) strategic priorities, as outlined in *Setting Priorities for the BC Health System* and the *2015/16-2017/18 Service Plan*.

The Seniors' Health Promotion Directorate within the Population and Public Health Division supports and oversees a number of programs and initiatives for BC seniors, such as:

- Age-friendly BC (AFBC) grants and recognition – AFBC provides grants, support, tools and information to help communities meet the needs of an aging population. There is a platform commitment of \$500,000 annually for the AFBC grants program, which provides grants of up to \$20,000 to local governments to support age-friendly work at the community level. In 2015, local governments were encouraged to consider planning and projects that complement provincial priorities for seniors such as Accessibility 2024, dementia, elder abuse prevention and non-medical home supports. AFBC recognition awards, consisting of \$1,000 and an AFBC poster, celebrate the achievement of key AFBC milestones.
- Better at Home – There is a platform commitment of \$10 million annually to support the Better at Home program, managed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland, which provides non-medical home support services (light housekeeping, yard work, snow shoveling, minor home repairs, grocery shopping, friendly visiting, and transportation to appointments) to help seniors remain in their own homes.

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Ministry of
Health

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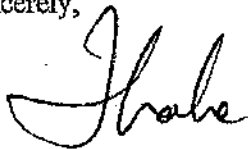
- Elder Abuse Prevention – *Together to Reduce Elder Abuse – BC's Strategy* (the TREA Strategy) is a coordinated, multi-sector approach with key commitments to identify, prevent and respond to elder abuse. The multi-sector Council to Reduce Elder Abuse was established in December 2013 to facilitate implementation of the TREA Strategy.
- Federal/Provincial/Territorial Forum of Ministers Responsible for Seniors (F/P/T Seniors Forum) – BC is co-chair with the federal government and will host the next meeting in 2016. BC is also active on the F/P/T Seniors Social Isolation and Social Innovation Working Group, which plans to host three or four “ideas exchange” events on social isolation across Canada in the coming year (including one in BC with a focus on rural and remote communities).
- Planning for Healthy Aging – this initiative will support and motivate older British Columbians to plan and prepare for changes that come with age, to help them better cope with changes, and to prevent the stress and associated health impacts of dealing with change in a crisis situation.

As Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors, you could play a critical role in promoting these important programs and initiatives, as well as offering ideas for how they could be enhanced. I understand you are interested in taking on a specific project during the term of your appointment. Potentially, you could lead the BC ideas exchange on social isolation for seniors in rural and remote communities, and also explore other areas related to that work. As you are aware, Ms. Isobel Mackenzie, Seniors Advocate, has been hearing from BC seniors on a range of topics. I suggest you meet with her to discuss emerging issues and concerns.

The Ministry is currently working to reposition key areas of the BC health sector – primary and community services, access to surgical services and effective and sustainable rural health services, all within a patient-centred, high performing health system. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss your role within this strategic context and the ways you can contribute to these transformative changes.

Again, congratulations on your appointment. I wish you every success in your new role.

Sincerely,



Terry Lake
Minister

pc: Ms. Arlene Paton, Assistant Deputy Minister, Population and Public Health Division
Mr. Doug Hughes, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Services and Quality Assurance Division
Ms. Isobel Mackenzie, Seniors Advocate, Office of the Seniors Advocate