



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY of BRITISH COLUMBIA



Sonia Furstenui MLA
Cowichan Valley

MINISTER'S OFFICE HEALTH		
<input type="checkbox"/> DRAFT <input type="checkbox"/> REPLY	NOV 08 2017	<input type="checkbox"/> REPLY <input type="checkbox"/> DIRECT
<input type="checkbox"/> FYI		<input type="checkbox"/> FILE
REMARKS		
<input type="checkbox"/> AA	<input type="checkbox"/> MA	<input type="checkbox"/> SA
<input type="checkbox"/> EA	<input type="checkbox"/> CCU	<input type="checkbox"/> DM

November 7, 2017

Dear Minister Dix,

British Columbia has historically been a leader in the fight against HIV. We are home to world leading research and outreach. British Columbians have access to testing, treatment, support and counselling, and referrals that help support people living with HIV. Our province is home to an incredible network of compassionate and caring people.

However the virus continues to disproportionately impact our communities. In particular, gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men make up more than 50% of infections in British Columbia, a number which has not changed over the last decade. More than 250 British Columbians contract HIV each year, costing the healthcare system millions in treatment costs.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is an HIV prevention drug that has been proven to prevent HIV in both clinical trials and real-world settings, and has been approved by Health Canada. PrEP, which is taken in the form of a once-a-day pill, is provided at no cost in many places around the world and is publicly covered in Quebec. When taken consistently, PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection in people who are at high risk by up to 92%. However, in British Columbia, Pharmacare still does not cover PrEP for HIV prevention. PrEP is currently available by prescription, but costs between \$500 and \$1,000 per month, and is only accepted by some extended health plans. The BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS has recommended PrEP coverage in British Columbia.

During the last election John Horgan, when interviewed by Xtra, pledged that if elected to government he would extend coverage to PrEP in British Columbia. This is an important tool in prevention and harm reduction for people at risk of contracting HIV.

I am requesting you please look into the status of this application for approval of PrEP to ensure that there are no unnecessary delays in the process of this application.

Thank you,

Sonia Furstenui
MLA for Cowichan Valley

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA



Sonia Furstenau, MLA
Cowichan Valley

October 19, 2017

Dear Minister Dix,

MINISTER'S OFFICE HEALTH		
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REMARKS		
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Earlier this week, I met with Dr. Tom Warshawski from Childhood Obesity Foundation and Mary Collins from the BC Alliance for Healthy Living (formerly, BCHLA), who work together on the Rethink Sugary Drinks Coalition program.

They were advocating for provincial sales tax (PST) to be added to all sales of sugary drinks. Because these beverages are considered groceries, they are not subject to PST. If the province were to extend PST to include sugary drinks, they estimate conservative revenues of \$30M, reduced consumption, and improved personal responsibility for making healthy choices.

We have seen the positive impact of education about sugary drinks in the Cowichan Valley. Last spring, principal Dani Morrow and her staff at Alexander Elementary School challenged students to bring no sugary drinks to school and to see how much water they could consume instead. The students exceeded their target and were rewarded with a whole-school trip to the swimming pool. The challenge was such a success with students and parents—the majority of whom are from the Cowichan First Nation—that the school introduced the challenge again this fall, which became a national news item.

I support Dr. Warshawski and Ms. Collins's vision to improve child health in this way. Please implement their proposed change to the provincial sales tax.

Thank you,

Sonia Furstenau
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY of BRITISH COLUMBIA



Sonia Furstenau, MLA
Cowichan Valley

January 17, 2018

Dear Minister Dix,

MINISTER'S OFFICE HEALTH	
DRAFT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	REPLY <input type="checkbox"/>
FYI <input type="checkbox"/>	JAN 19 2018
REMARKS <i>copy + Jan</i>	REPLY DIRECT <input type="checkbox"/>
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Happy new year! I hope you had a good break over the holidays. My office has hit the ground running for 2018 and one of our top priorities is the new hospital in the Cowichan Valley.

I understand that Island Health submitted the concept plan for the new hospital in December. We would like to know when you will have an announcement on moving forward with the business case.

I don't need to remind you of the desperate need the Cowichan Valley is facing with the existing Cowichan District Hospital. We celebrated its 50th anniversary with palliative patients in the hospital halls, out-of-date operating rooms, a worrying seismic issue, and unacceptable emergency-room wait times. This facility is no longer able to meet the needs of our growing community.

During the campaign, Premier John Horgan came to the Cowichan Valley to announce that "the Cowichan Hospital will be replaced by an NDP government." The community partners who have worked together tirelessly for years to achieve this outcome expect and hope that the announcement on moving forward is imminent.

The Cowichan District Hospital's mission statement is "Exceptional care; exceptional people." We are beyond ready for your announcement so that Cowichan can begin to build its exceptional facility.

Sincerely,

Sonia Furstenau
MLA for Cowichan Valley

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