

Honourable Adrian Dix
Minister of Health
Room 337 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

November 15, 2022

Dear Minister Dix,

Re: B.C. Emergency Health Services ambulance service reduction in Kelowna

As Members of the Legislative Assembly that represent residents in Kelowna and surrounding areas, we are writing to you to express our grave concern about B.C. Emergency Health Services' (BCEHS) decision to reduce the number of ambulances in Kelowna by 30 per cent. As a rapidly growing region which has already been suffering from a shortage of health care and emergency services, this decision will be dangerous for residents who will now face even longer wait times and uncertainty when dealing with health emergencies.

The Union of Ambulance Paramedics in B.C. has voiced its concerns about this decision, citing not just the longer response times for Kelowna residents, but also the impact this will have on the recruitment and retention of paramedics going forward. There is a clear need for robust emergency health services and more permanent paramedic positions in Kelowna — and that need is only increasing with each passing day.

The situation is already dire and has been for months. The health care crisis has been felt across the province, and as we're dealing with staffing shortages and unstaffed ambulances, people have been experiencing excruciatingly long wait times for ambulances to arrive — tragically, these delays have sometimes been deadly.

Reducing ambulance service and not supporting the full-time permanent paramedic positions that Kelowna residents and paramedics are calling for should not be an option at a time like this. We cannot afford to make the health care crisis worse by failing to supply the permanent resources needed in our communities. British Columbians deserve better, and the people of Kelowna need to know BCEHS will bring back the ambulances which have been taken off the streets and increase service to our region.

For the safety of our community, we kindly request that you take action immediately, and ensure Kelowna has the full-time paramedics and resources required to operate the ambulances our city desperately needs.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Sincerely,

Renee Merrifield
MLA, Kelowna-Mission

Norm Letnick
MLA, Kelowna-Lake
Country

Ben Stewart
MLA, Kelowna West

CC: Shirley Bond, Official Opposition Critic for Seniors Services and Long-Term Care, and Critic for Health, and MLA for Prince George-Valemount