



The United Church Health Services Society

Affiliated with Northern Health Authority and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

Bella Coola General Hospital

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Central Coast Regional District

November 29, 2013

Honourable Terry Lake
Minister of Health
Room 337 Parliament Bldg
VICTORIA, B.C.
V8V 1XR

Via email terry.lake.mla@leg.bc.ca

Dear Minister Lake,

The community of Bella Coola is still reeling from the devastating news regarding the cancellation of Route 40 (BC Ferries) Port Hardy to Bella Coola.

Years ago in the 1990's we were delighted with the implementation of ferry service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola as not only did we see an increase in tourism and tourism based businesses in the Bella Coola Valley, but the women of Bella Coola now had annual access to the Mobile Screening Mammography Program of B.C. Route 40 (BC Ferries) provided a transportation means to move the heavy mammography van into the community as Highway 20 was simply too rough to transport the sensitive mammography equipment contained in the van.

We have enjoyed this valuable service for approximately twenty years, providing the opportunity to the majority of women in the community over the age of 40 to access service easily and at no cost. Statistics provided by the Screening Mammography Program of B.C. indicate 94 women visited the program in Bella Coola in 2013 and 75 women in 2012. With the cancellation of Route 40 comes the cancellation of the mobile Screening Mammography Program of BC and the annual visit to Bella Coola.

The potential impact to the health of women will be significant as no longer will it be convenient and at no expense for the women in the community of Bella Coola to access the mobile screening mammography program.

The financial impact to our small hospital will be staggering with an additional \$50,196.00 required to be found from our existing over stretched health budget to

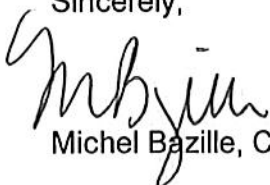
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provide transportation through the Central Coast Health Connections Travel Program to access healthcare services not available in our community.

This news leaves me wondering what the future viability of the community will look like including our healthcare services. Is this the first of many cuts as we watch businesses fold and leave along with our human resources? We already struggle to recruit and retain healthcare professionals to our community, what will this look like in a few years as government continues to not recognize the importance of rural British Columbia.

Please take a few minutes, consider the impact to the residents of Bella Coola, in particular the health of the women who will be affected by this decision. There has to be a way to continue the Ferry service with a more effective business plan which has not been explored.

Sincerely,



Michel Bazille, COO

Cc: Honourable Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
Honourable Christy Clark, Premier of B.C.
Darin Guenette, Manager Public Affairs, BC Ferries
Darla Blake, CAO, Central Coast Regional Hospital District
Leonard Ellis, President, Bella Coola Valley Tourism Society