



January 23, 2018

Vancouver School Board
1580 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC
V6J 5K8

Re: Dual Credit Programs for Health Care Assistants (HCAs)

Dear Vancouver School Board

On behalf of the BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA), I am writing to you about an opportunity that our members have identified for students in Vancouver.

With Canada's aging population, employment in the health care sector is expected to increase by an average of 2.3% by 2025, with Care Aide / Health Care Assistant positions ranked 10th in priority health professions.

WorkBC projects that there will be 18,650 job openings for health care aides over the next ten years (2017-2027), 60% of which will be new jobs due to economic growth. More immediately, the BC Ministry of Health has identified a need for an increase of about 1,500 full time equivalents (FTEs) in the long term care sector over the next 3 years, including 900 FTE additional Health Care Assistants.

In order to meet the demand for these workers, BCCPA members have identified the need to begin to significantly increase the number of young workers employed in our sector. Unfortunately, few vocational programs currently exist to allow high school students to begin a rewarding career as a Health Care Aide.

While many vocational programs are available for career orientation students, many of these fields are traditionally male-dominated, and may be perceived by students as unwelcoming for women. Furthermore, many of these occupations are most suitable for individuals who are technically minded. Underrepresented among dual credit programs are fields that are female-dominated, as well as industries that are suitable for those who are naturally compassionate, socially-skilled and community minded.

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The BCCPA considers this to be a significant oversight given the many benefits of working as a Health Care Aide. The Health Employers Association of BC reports that an experienced Health Care Aide can earn an average of \$33 per hour, including wages and benefits, and unlike many low-skill careers, occupations in the health care sector are considered by most experts to be stable occupations with a low-risk of automation.

This is also a rewarding career for those that are social orientated and compassionate. Dual credit programs are instrumental in attracting compassionate workers into this important sector; the BCCPA's 2016 winner of our *Care Providers of the Year Award*, Tasia Warren, is a graduate of a dual credit program. Warren has publicly attributed her success in this field to her opportunity to participate in a dual credit program offered through Okanagan College.

Opportunities in the Seniors Care sector are not just limited to Health Care Aides, however. As the second fastest growing industry in BC over the next ten years, Seniors Care will offer stable employment for many career-orientation students, in occupations including practical nursing, rehabilitation aides, recreation/activity aides, dietary aides and cooks.

The BCCPA urges you to consider expanding the number of spaces within your dual-credit program offerings to include more Health Care Assistants to meet this critical shortage, as well as other in-demand occupations. This would allow your career-orientation students to enter rewarding, secure, high-demand jobs in the Seniors Care sector with as little as seven months of education and training.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions or concerns regarding the above. I look forward to discussing this issue with you further at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Fontaine".

Daniel Fontaine
CEO, BCCPA

About Us: [BC Care Providers Association](http://www.bccare.ca) is the leading industry association for BC's continuing care sector. We have been serving non-government care providers for 40 years. Our growing membership includes over 300 residential care, assisted living, home support and commercial members across British Columbia. Over 23,000 seniors and younger adults living with an acquired brain injury or neurological disease receive their care from our members each day.

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