



March 22, 2019

Carol Bellringer
Auditor General of British Columbia
Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia

By email.

Dear Madame Auditor General:

Established in 1977, BC Care Providers (BCCPA) is the leading voice representing the non-government seniors' care sector in British Columbia in residential care, assisted living, home care and home support.

Given our association's long and collaborative relationship with the provincial government, it was a complete surprise when on Wednesday, March 13, in the absence of any prior consultation with the sector, BCCPA learned of the Government of B.C.'s decision to expropriate well over 4,000 private and non-profit community health jobs and convert them into positions working directly for government health authorities. **By any measure, this is the single largest expansion of the public service in our province's history.**

Our Association is extremely concerned that this transition has the potential to severely impact home support services delivered to BC seniors, including continuity of care. We also expect that this decision will also significantly drive up costs by an estimated 30% - **without delivering a single additional hour of care for the same tax dollars invested.** To put this increase in context, in 2017/18 the province of B.C. spent \$488.1 million on home support alone (not including home care). Finally, this decision may result in job losses of **up to 500 positions**, specifically as it relates to excluded positions such as schedulers, managers and support staff.

As such, we are writing to the Office of the Auditor General to ask for the consideration of a full and independent review of the policy decision and cost to taxpayers related to the expropriation of home support staff. Given the one-year timeline for full implementation, there is also a level of urgency to complete this work prior to the staff being transitioned into government.

Metrotower 1 | 1424-4710 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC, V5H 4M2
www.bccare.ca | 604.736.4233

Specifically, BCCPA is asking for this review to investigate the following questions:

- Has an adequate business case been developed and cost analysis been conducted by the Ministry of Health to support the decision to expropriate 4000+ private sector jobs?
- Has the complex issue of bumping rights been factored into the overall costing and potential service disruption to seniors? If so, what measures have been put in place to mitigate this potential issue?
- Will operating costs be impacted by the fact that most of the employees being transferred from the private sector to the health authorities are coming from different unions? This will lead to employees doing the same job and working for the same employer belonging to different public sector unions.
- What additional costs are expected to be incurred by the province in the areas of staffing, benefits, severance pay, orientation etc.?
- Are the planned transition times, which range from 6 months to twelve months (with a six-month extension option), sufficient for a transition of this magnitude?
- Were allowances made for future cost increases as B.C.'s population ages?

Federal Investments in Homecare in BC

In addition to the matter of how sustainable these changes are, BCCPA also seeks clarity on how the B.C. government has utilized new funding provided in the February 2017 BC-Canada health accord. It was during that month when the federal government and the Government of British Columbia announced an agreement to invest \$785.7 million in new targeted federal funding for improvements in home care over 10 years.

As the six publicly funded care providers affected by this expropriation were all facing varying levels of underfunding, it was anticipated that new federal investments in home care were going to address this inequity. There was no indication these new federal investments were going to be used as a rationale to transfer staff into the employ of the provincial government.

In the release issued by Health Canada, it was noted that funding would begin to be transferred in the 2017-18 fiscal year, and that *"governments would be developing performance indicators and mechanisms for annual reporting to citizens, as well as a detailed plan on how these funds will be spent, over and above existing programs."*



Very little information has been made publicly available, as to how the funding has been spent to date. BCCPA would greatly welcome your support in getting answers from the provincial government on the following questions:

- How have these home care funds been used over the last fiscal year, if at all?
- What new services or programs have been supported by the federal funds to date?
- What performance indicators and mechanisms have been put in place as to report to citizens?

Recommendations to Ministry of Health

In order to address some of our concerns the BCCPA is recommending the Ministry of Health:

1. Put an immediate halt on the expropriation of 4000+ private sector jobs;
2. Conduct a fulsome and meaningful consultation with the sector and seniors, regarding the impacts of this decision as well as any possible unintended consequences.
3. Publicly release the business case including cost analysis supporting the largest ever expansion of the public service in BC history.

On behalf of the thousands of seniors who receive publicly funded home care services each year and the over 4000 workers who care for them, we trust you will give our request your full consideration. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincere regards,

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

Daniel Fontaine
CEO
BC Care Providers Association