

March 4, 2014

The Hon. Terry Lake, Minister of Health
PO Box 9060, STN Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Lake

On behalf of the Association of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (ARNBC) and the 36,000 Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners we represent, I am writing to share our concerns about the Ministry of Health 2014/15 – 2015/16 Service Plan. ARNBC is concerned about the increasing lack of nursing leadership, input and oversight in Ministry planning and policy decisions. This absence is very evident throughout the Service Plan.

While we understand the need to engage stakeholders in the planning process, we were disappointed that this document seems to indicate that any engagement in this case was almost entirely with physicians. The Ministry has identified interprofessional collaboration as a priority for healthcare, and we agree with that priority. The Service Plan's primary focus, however, is on a physician-centric model of primary care.

A key example of the need for consultation between government and the nursing profession was made particularly clear in the recent Service Plan where the Ministry indicated it will "Increase the scope of practice for Nurse Practitioners in B.C. by working with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC (CPSBC) and other credentialing organizations." The College of Registered Nurses of BC has regulated Nurse Practitioners since 2005, and there has been no consultation within the nursing community that would suggest a change of this magnitude is required. We join the BC Nurse Practitioner Association (BCNPA) in requesting written clarification for the rationale behind this objective, which we could then share with our concerned members. ARNBC supports the role of Nurse Practitioners in providing primary health care services and continues to collaborate with the BCNPA to determine how to strengthen support and awareness for this important group within the nursing profession.

All health professions have unique expertise and skills to contribute to system planning and innovation, and we strongly urge you to expand your future collaborations to include Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners and other health professionals in every phase of policy development and system planning. Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners must be included in decisions that impact our professional practice and the health of the individuals we serve. We urge you to immediately develop a strategy for including all health professions in future system planning.

Sincerely,



Julie Fraser, RN, MN
President, Association of Registered Nurses of BC

Cc: Stan Marchuk, BCNPA President
Stephen Brown, DM Ministry of Health