



THE VILLAGE OF
NAKUSP

November 21, 2024

Honourable Josie Osborne
Minister of Health
PO Box 9050
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Victoria BC, V8W 9E2
HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca

To Honorable Josie Osborne, Minister of Health,

RE: BC Alert-Ready Program to include Health Services for notification of Emergency Room Closures

Citizens within our small rural community are outraged by the Health Authority's lack of communication when the Emergency Room at our local hospital unexpectedly closes. Rural communities are left in life-or-death situations when an ER is unexpectedly closed and effective notification is not issued. If our residents serviced by the Arrow Lakes Hospital arrive to find the ER closed, the next closest ER is two and a half (2.5) hours away. Knowing ahead of time the Arrow Lakes Hospital ER is closed allows people to respond appropriately in a time of crisis. Knowing they must travel to another hospital will save valuable time when it matters most.

We know we are not the only community in BC affected by sudden ER closures that occur without adequate public notice. However, we acknowledge that the province already has a tool to provide the public with the necessary notifications. The Province's Alert-Ready system can notify citizens and other emergency service providers about ER closures. This will save lives and ensure people are not wasting valuable time by travelling to an ER that is temporarily closed.

The Province's Alert-Ready program states that the alert must meet the following criteria before proceeding:

- There is a threat to human life
- The threat is immediate
- There are recommended actions that may save lives.

An emergency room closure, whether planned or unplanned, threatens human life. The threat is immediate, and there is a recommended action that can save lives.

On October 16, 2024, Council for the Village of Nakusp resolved the following R232/24:

THAT staff be directed to write a letter to the Provincial Government requesting they include the Provincial Health Services in their Alert Ready program to communicate with the public and advise of Emergency Room closures.



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With best regards,

Tom Zeleznik
Village of Nakusp, Mayor

Cc:
Honourable Garry Begg, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
MLA Brittny Anderson
All BC Municipalities