

August , 2022

Hugh Nerlien, MLA
Box 547
Porcupine Plain, Saskatchewan
S0E 1H0

Re: Health Care services in Foam Lake, Saskatchewan

Dear Hugh,

I am writing this letter to express my concern with the Health Care services in Foam Lake, Saskatchewan.

Despite efforts of our community, the Foam Lake hospital was closed in 2000, with the promise of keeping a primary health care centre open to help meet the non-urgent needs of our residents. Our primary health centre is to be staffed with two permanent full time Nurse Practitioners (NP) along with a rotating group of physicians from Wynyard. Our health care centre has been operating with only one NP for over two years with no applicants to fill the vacant second NP position. We are now faced with the reality of losing our current and only Nurse Practitioner at the end of this month. This leaves both NP positions vacant, our health care centre short staffed and ultimately our residents without access to non-urgent health care services in our community. Without ongoing and consistent health care coverage, many of our residents have relied on emergency care in surrounding communities, have gone without chronic disease management, and have suffered adverse health outcomes as a result. The cost of these gaps in care to our residents, our community, our health care system and ultimately our province is overwhelming.

In addition to the stresses surrounding the shortages of primary care providers, our long term care home has faced multiple bed closures as a result of staff shortages and has relied heavily on travel nurses to keep the doors open and local residents in their home community. The critical shortages of RNs, LPNs, and CCAs have impacted our seniors, their families, and the health care providers who work critically short staffed in these facilities.

The opportunity is now, “grow your own” programs is something that the Town of Foam Lake is very much interested in collaborating with the government and the SHA to develop programs/incentives for health care staff already working in our facilities to upgrade their education. In addition, there needs to be a shift from the SHA to provide less part time positions offered and more full time jobs given to both CCA’s and nurses. Many positions are posted as .25 positions or .75 positions in our facilities.

As you are aware, there is a significant staff shortage in health care positions in our community as well as other rural communities. The government and the SHA are working in partnership to address these shortages, but now is the time for advocacy, creativity and unity.

Respectfully,

Resident Name

Resident Address