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Shelley Thoen-Chaykoski
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Dear Madame:

RE: Foam Lake Primary Care and Continuing Care Services

We are writing in response to your letter regarding Primary Health Care (PHC) and Continuing Care services in Foam Lake received by the Saskatchewan Health Authority in Aug 2022. Thank you for taking the time to send the letter. As your letter highlights, Foam Lake along with many other communities in Saskatchewan and across Canada is experiencing unprecedented staffing shortages.

Foam Lake has had longstanding challenges with the recruitment and retention of providers over the past years, including Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Combined Lab and X-Ray Technicians (CLXTs), nursing staff, and other providers. Currently, the Primary Health Care Clinic has two NP positions posted. One is a permanent position that has been vacant for two years; the second vacancy is for a maternity leave. We have been actively recruiting NPs and have had some success in securing casual NPs that will provide services to Foam Lake due to these vacancies. Orientation has started this week for the new NPs. They are also looking at options to maximize NP hours in the clinic, including extended hours for access on some days. We are also exploring options with the Primary Health Care (PHC) team in Yorkton and opportunities for travel out to provide support to Foam Lake. Wynyard Physicians continue to provide primary health care services 3 days a week.

The staffing challenges at the Jubilee Home are longstanding and we have temporarily closed 15 of 51 beds. This decision was made to support our staff and maintain safe care for our residents. We have had consistent use of and need for contract nurses since October 2021. At this time, we only have one contract nurse. All nursing positions are permanent full-time or temporary full-time. As of September 15, 2022, we will have 6 out of 7 lines filled temporarily plus one contract nurse. Continuing Care Aide (CCA) shortages are also occurring at this time. Once our staffing is stabilized we plan to re-open the closed beds.

The resumption of all services at all sites supports the SHA's goal to provide care as close to home as possible. In order to fulfill this goal, we will use new and innovative delivery models, including team-based care, expanding to other team members in the area, and using technologies like virtual care. With these new opportunities and innovations, we aim to build a reliable and predictable service delivery model for rural primary care services in Foam Lake.

The Government of Saskatchewan recently released an aggressive [Health Human Resources Action Plan](#) that builds on existing initiatives and incentives, and will assist the SHA with addressing the staffing challenges that communities across Saskatchewan are currently facing. The plan includes investments of over \$60 million through a four-point plan to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain more healthcare professionals to stabilize and strengthen Saskatchewan's healthcare workforce.

This is a unique time in health care and one that does require collaboration between communities and the SHA. The community's "Grow your Own" concept and investing in your own is a great opportunity to ensure those that choose to stay in rural communities for their career have an incentive to do so. There are also incentives for hard-to-recruit positions like NPs and Physiotherapists in the form of bursaries and

grants if they relocate to rural Saskatchewan. Our Human Resources/Labour Relations team is also working to add profiles of communities alongside job postings, and working with each community to build these.

We are currently working with the Ministry to address various human resource needs across the province, particularly in rural Saskatchewan. As noted, this will take some innovative and creative solutions and we are pleased that the residents and leadership in Foam Lake are sharing ideas that may support these and additional efforts. We look forward to meeting with your local leadership in the coming weeks and months to look at all opportunities to ensure we have a strong team of providers to deliver services close to home for the residents of Foam Lake and surrounding communities.

Again, thank you for your letter.

Sincerely,



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