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Dear Members,

## **Re: Member Update – Current Events**

On behalf of the Provincial Executive Board, I want to provide a high-level update and summary following what we know has been one of the toughest weeks we have faced as a profession and service in BC. We know there is tremendous anger, despair, and still unprocessed feelings from the disaster last week and going back through the last few months, years and farther, none of this happened overnight; however, we are in it now.

It is ok to be angry. It is ok to have rage and it is ok to feel despair that staffing, and workload levels are high, wages and benefits need drastic improvement and respect for all of us is desperately lacking. Answering, dispatching, and doing one call at a time, being there for each other is how we will get through this together. History will record, for all to witness, who got us into this, who did everything to get us out of this and those who did not.

I know many of you have been questioning and demanding action and accountability of the Union, and that's fair. Please know we are adjusting and adapting every day and doing all we can. To help keep up to date, I ask that you please review our communications and media going back which are on the website <http://www.apbc.ca/news/> and social media platforms, particularly over the last few weeks.

We are very appreciative of the overwhelming support of the public, media, and public safety partners such as Police and Fire who have spoken up in support of the impacts on you all, our patients, and the crises we have been facing. We need everyone helping for immediate changes.

We are so proud of the incredible dedication and sacrifices that all of you have made and continue to make every day. You are all under incredible pressures and it's a good reminder we need to look after ourselves and each other.

We, like all of you were disappointed and angry by the Employer's responses to the recent media inquiries and the Employer's lack of action, acknowledgment, or support.

Since long before the COVID pandemic, staffing crisis and heat emergency, the Union has provided multiple briefing notes and proposed solutions to address some of the systematic issues to the Employer. To see our Chief blame the Union and Collective Agreement, in the media, as an excuse for the Employer's failure to address is disappointing, at best. Clearly, it is a distraction from the fact that BCEHS refused to implement even basic emergency management concepts.

The Employer has ample Collective Agreement language to address emergency situations such as fires, MCIs, heat emergencies: for example, Article 16.04 (c), which has been in the Collective Agreement since before 1990, speaks specifically about "emergency situations."

In the parallel to the public and media pressure and questions, we have been doing everything possible to get the Employer to do something, anything to help you manage this crisis and listen to our solutions going back to September.

Recently, we have been meeting with the Ministry of Health (MOH) on many of the solutions we have put forward and this engagement has been very productive for medium and long-term solutions.

Following the issues since last Friday, I had the opportunity to meet with Minister Dix yesterday, one-to-one to discuss the challenges and the state of our service. We discussed the immediate needs and solutions to get us through the summer to allow for time to address longer term fixes.

Minister Dix expressed his concerns with recent events and pressures, on the service, your wellbeing, and on the patients we serve. He has committed to work with the APBC Executive immediately to address these issues. He asked that I let you all know he is very aware and wants to do all he can to address the issues and crises we are all facing. We covered everything we are facing and discussed solutions to have immediate impacts for the patients and members.

The MOH has asked us for specific solutions, and we are working all weekend to produce a briefing note that will go directly to the Minister. He has requested a meeting following the weekend with our Executive to review and discuss our solutions and the matters we all are facing and formulate a plan. He has also proposed a membership address in the near future, similar to the one he did last year for our members.

Right now, we need you to know that there is hope that things are going to get better. In the face of adversity like this service has never seen in 47 years, you continue to shine and make this profession proud. We know that if it weren't for the dedication of the crews and dispatchers many more people may have suffered.

Your Executive and I feel hope is on the horizon with the encouraging acknowledgement and support of government, the public, media, our partners and all of us sticking together. We will be resilient and able to respond and change the urgent challenges we are in and are facing.

Be safe,



Troy Clifford  
Provincial President  
Ambulance Paramedics & Emergency Dispatchers of BC  
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TC/sb/MoveUp

