
Date: August 1, 2024

To: All BCEHS Employees/Ambulance Paramedics of BC CUPE Local 873 Members

RE: Support During Hospital Closures and Landslide in Interior

Staffing pressures on hospitals continue to rise across the province. We are now seeing more closures and diversions happening and we should anticipate more to come. From smaller health centres to even larger hospitals, many areas are or will soon be affected.

We want to remind you that the BCEHS [summer staffing strategy](#) was designed specifically to meet these kinds of challenges. Among other things, this plan helps fund the additional resources we need to help with changes in hospital service levels.

All health authorities are actively seeking ways to mitigate hospital closures and emergency department diversions and BCEHS is once again a key piece of this puzzle. We want to personally thank you all for everything you are doing to help ensure patients receive the continuity of care they need.

The nature of these diversions and closures are especially difficult when they're happening seemingly last minute, however we know from talking to our health authority partners that often this is because their emergency departments are doing all they can to mitigate closures in any and all ways possible right up to the last minute. During these changing times, please continue to use all by-pass processes and alternative destination pathways currently in place. **Also note that specific ED closures are being/will be communicated via the CAD to crews.**

Many members of the BCEHS leadership team are on high alert, monitoring hospital status changes and identifying ways BCEHS crews can help support our health authority partners navigate these staffing shortages. BCEHS has a dedicated health authority liaison, Darlene Emes, who is in constant contact with our healthcare partners and is actively helping us plan for areas that require upstaffing or specialized EHS resources like our critical care paramedics or air resources.

Concurrent to hospital diversions, we are activating a District Emergency Operations Centre (DEOC) to support operations for the landslide that has blocked the Chilcotin River and is posing a threat of flooding. An evacuation order is in place for 60 properties, including 13 homes. A flood warning, flood watch and high streamflow advisory are also in effect. More information on this is forthcoming. Further, we are also activating the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) to support DEOC activities.

BCEHS and APBC recognize there are significant pressures on our crews and staffing as a result of these concurrent dynamic and frequently changing situations. However, what we are seeing and hearing in terms of how we are stepping up for our communities and patients, is phenomenal. Our staff never

cease to impress with their willingness to work hard and to do whatever they can to help. We both want to take a moment to say we see you and we appreciate all you are doing.

Jointly signed,

On behalf of BCEHS

Jennie Helmer
Chief Operations Officer
BC Emergency Health Services

On behalf of APBC

Jason Jackson
Provincial President
Ambulance Paramedics of BC, CUPE Local 873