

Dear Minister Adrian Dix and Dr. Bonnie Henry,

As healthcare providers in British Columbia (BC), we are urgently writing to the Ministry of Health to adhere to evidence based public health policy, and provide health services to ALL people in BC regardless of eligibility for Medical Services Plan (MSP) or immigration status.

The World Health Organization [defines health as a human right](#), yet it is not guaranteed for thousands of individuals in British Columbia. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that our community wellbeing is highly interconnected, and we place our entire society at risk by failing to guarantee access to affordable healthcare to all people.

Although some changes have been announced for select migrant communities, many people are being left behind which threatens the human rights and health of all of us in BC.

In the interest of maintaining our commitments to human rights and upholding the tenets of a meaningful public health response in a time of crisis, we request the following to be addressed immediately:

1. All people in BC be enrolled in MSP regardless of immigration status

- Current policy suggests there may be coverage for COVID-19 health services only. An artificial distinction between COVID-19 related services and other essential health care is shortsighted and dangerous. There is significant variability in how COVID-19 presents, making it difficult for healthcare providers to know what constitutes a COVID-19 related service - this false distinction is harmful as it may lead to missed testing and treatment and increased community transmission.
- Full and comprehensive coverage of all health services will also ease the administrative burden on frontline healthcare providers working to control this pandemic, rather than having them waste time with bureaucratic gatekeeping.
- **To effectively “flatten the curve,” policy must ensure universal access to all essential health services.**

2. Create a streamlined and simple process for full MSP enrollment

- Patients are still being forced to navigate complicated pathways to access care, and many continue to be denied access to essential healthcare services.
- Large fees for medical services are a deterrent to care seeking and may result in sick patients avoiding necessary life-preserving care.
- As health care workers, we need to be confident that if we are pursuing diagnoses, then appropriate treatment can be offered, including necessary hospitalization and acute care.
- Uninsured individuals across British Columbia require universal access to healthcare that is effectively implemented from the level of policy to the patient experience - inconsistency only serves to create further inequity and confusion within an existing patchwork-system.
- **If someone who is positive with COVID-19 needs care but avoids it due to fear of inability to pay, it not only violates their right to health but also contravenes good public health practice, which is thus far the most evidence based approach to managing this pandemic.**

3. Clearly communicate with care providers, patients and the public that ALL people will have safe access to healthcare without the fear of debt or deportation

- Policy implementation and communication has been slow, unclear, and fragmented, leading to confusion and inequitable application of policy changes.
- This is resulting in further uneven policy implementation, creating unnecessary distrust and confusion from patients.
- **As health care workers, we need to know what the policies are and how they will be implemented.**

4. Health care institutions must affirm in their patient privacy policies that they will not share information with the CBSA.

- When patients fear that their confidential information will be shared and risk deportation, they will avoid care.

- Health authorities in BC have made significant improvements in reducing reporting to CBSA, and these gains must be maintained.

Any policy that results in patients avoiding essential health care yields worsening health inequities and health outcomes; these are amplified during the current pandemic with additional public health risks if a symptomatic person avoids the health care system. The Ministry of Health has taken an important first step in affirming coverage by announcing that it will provide “provincially insured health care coverage for services related to, suspected, or confirmed cases of infection with COVID-19;” however the policy needs to be fully implemented, simplified and expanded to ensure that all people working and residing in BC have access to appropriate and necessary health care, for themselves and our community.

Sincerely,

1. Vanessa Johnson, Registered Nurse, Vancouver
2. Natalie Blair, Registered Nurse (FNP student), REACH Community Health Centre, Vancouver
3. Barbara Harvey, RN, VGH, Vancouver
4. Anahita Sebti, Registered Nurse, REACH Urgent Primary Care Centre, Vancouver
5. Mei-ling Wiedmeyer, MD, Family Physician, Vancouver
6. Karina Zeidler, Family Physician, Vancouver
7. Rita McCracken, MD PhD, Physician, Vancouver
8. Andrea Szewchuk, MD, CCFP, Vancouver, BC
9. Verity Buskard, Registered Nurse, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Vancouver
10. Matthew K Laing, Resident Physician, Vancouver
11. Gloria Yuen, Nurse, Vancouver
12. Sari Raber, Physician, Vancouver
13. Kelly Miller, Registered Nurse, Vancouver
14. Robyn Kosugi, Registered Nurse, Vancouver
15. Kalen Geddes, GP, Prince George
16. Tara Taylor, Director of Community Engagement and Development, Vancouver
17. Victoria Zhang, Resident Physician, Toronto
18. Bilal Baghq, Family Medicine Resident (MD), Victoria
19. Sarah Reaburn, Midwife and Registered Nurse, Strathcona Midwifery Collective, Vancouver
20. Verity Livingstone, Physician, Vancouver
21. Navi Dasanjh, Social Worker, Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver
22. Ilene Bell, Midwife, Nelson
23. Kearston Bergeron, Registered Midwife, Squamish, BC
24. Alyson Jones, Midwife, Victoria
25. Jesse Brown, Registered Midwife, Vancouver
26. Jess Knowles, Midwife, Chilliwack
27. Abigail Mikkelson, Registered Midwife, New Westminster
28. Linda Jordan-Knox, Registered Midwife, South Community Birth Program, Vancouver
29. Elizabeth Leonardis, Nurse Practitioner, VCH, Vancouver
30. Caitlin Botkin, Registered Nurse, Vancouver
31. Lydia, Midwife, Cowichan Bay
32. Melanie Dowler, Registered Midwife, Pomegranate Community Midwives, Vancouver
33. Savannah Chapman, Midwife, Vancouver
34. Andrea Barth, Midwife, Vancouver
35. Carla Black, Midwife, Courtenay
36. Amanda Reid, Registered Midwife, Sechelt
37. Amelia Doran, RM, Chilliwack
38. Stephanie Dow, Registered Midwife, Vancouver
39. Elizabeth Nethery, Registered Midwife, Vancouver
40. Rachel Rees, Registered Midwife, Vancouver
41. Elizabeth Gregg, Midwife, Chilliwack

42. Jyoti, Paramedic, Vancouver
43. Andrea Brett, Registered Midwife, Vancouver
44. Kirsten Desjardins-Lorimer, Physician, REACH CHC, Vancouver
45. Joan Trinh Pham, Registered Nurse, Vancouver
46. Melissa, Midwife, Kelowna
47. Lynn Farrales, Family Physician, Vancouver
48. Laura, Social Worker, Burnaby
49. Susan Nouch, Family Physician, Vancouver
50. Ranjit, Nurse Practitioner, Burnaby
51. Sara Hosseina, Nurse Practitioner, North Vancouver
52. Sonja Rietkerk, Nurse Practitioner, RISE Community Health Centre, Vancouver
53. Srinivas Murthy, Physician, Vancouver
54. Leah Diana, Nurse, Vancouver
55. Jenny Hernandez, Physician, Reach CHC, Vancouver
56. Mel Mundell, Midwifery, Midwives Association of BC, Vancouver
57. Nancy Hsiao-Lan Tsao, Registered Midwife, Richmond
58. Shireen Soofi, Social Worker, Vancouver
59. Stephane Voyer, Physician, Vancouver
60. Dina Davidson, Registered Midwife, Inlet Community Birth Program, Port Moody
61. Lalya Wickremasinghe, Physician, Vancouver
62. Zoë Broersma, Midwife, Langley
63. Jennifer Woo, Nurse Practitioner, Global family care clinic, Burnaby
64. Madeline Wilson, Counsellor, Foundry, Prince George
65. Vanessa Brcic, Family Physician, Vancouver, BC
66. Justine Spencer, Family Physician, Vancouver
67. Christine Singh, Family Physician, Community practice, Vancouver
68. Terri-Leigh Aldred, MD, CSFS, Prince George
69. Riley Davidson, Family Physician, Vancouver
70. Jennifer Leavitt, Family Physician, Vancouver
71. Neasa Coll, Physician, Vancouver
72. Zoë Broersma, Midwife, Langley
73. Lee Saxell, Midwife, SCBP, Vancouver
74. Caroline Philippon, RN, SCBP, Vancouver
75. Lori Wolfe, Nurse Practitioner, Vancouver
76. Maralyn Hope, Family Physician, South Hill, Vancouver
77. Gilbert Lam, Pediatrician, Vancouver
78. Linda Knox, Registered Midwife, South Community Birth Program, Vancouver
79. Danielle Schroeder, Clinical Counsellor, South Community Birth program, Vancouver
80. Rebecca Dickinson, Midwife, BCWH, Vancouver
81. Dr. Karina Zeidler, Physician, Vancouver
82. Stephanie Stacey, Physician, Vancouver
83. Adriana Bucz, Registered Nurse, First Nations Health Authority, Fort Ware
84. Ian Arbuckle, Physician, Vancouver
85. Brenda Hardie, Physician, North Vancouver
86. Katherine Bertram, MD, Vancouver
87. Vicki Klassen, Physician, Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver
88. Adriana Mejia-French, Family Doctor, BCWH, St Paul's, South Hill Family Centre, Vancouver
89. Maralyn Hope, Family Physician, South Hill, Vancouver
90. Ian Arbuckle, Physician, Vancouver
91. Caroline Philippon, RN, SCBP, Vancouver
92. Jennifer Ross, Family Physician, Victoria
93. Ranjit Lehal, Nurse Practitioner, Burnaby
94. Imara Beattie, Student, Vancouver
95. Nesa Hamidi Tousi, Registered Nurse, Vancouver

96. Sandi Witherspoon, Family Doctor, Vancouver
97. Shila Avissa, RSW, Social Worker, Vancouver
98. Danielle Schroeder, Clinical Counsellor, South Community Birth Program, Vancouver
99. Birinder Narang, Family Physician, Vancouver
100. Laura Miller, Physician, Vancouver
101. Nima Bolow, Settlement Worker, ISSofBC, New Westminster
102. Adan Sallow, Settlement worker, ISSofBC, Vancouver
103. Indira Wickremasinghe, Library - Community Support Technician, Vancouver Island Regional Library,
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