November 4, 2011

Dear Mayors of British Columbia,

At the recent annual meeting of the UBCM I heard the ongoing concerns of many Mayors regarding doctor shortages in several BC communities. I am committed to working with you and other concerned leaders to address this growing need.

More than 500 women and men from British Columbia are studying to be physicians in Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and other English speaking countries. They are from cities and towns across BC. And, they could be our future doctors!

The challenge for these BC medical students abroad is finding a BC residency position when they graduate. The challenge for BC Mayors is finding a sustainable supply of doctors to serve the needs of their communities. My goal: to increase the number of training residency positions across BC.

To meet these challenges and achieve my goal some basic things need to happen. Conflicting policies and regulations around residency placements need to be changed. Physician faculty need to be recruited and finances found to increase the number of residency positions in this province.

Some of your colleagues have told me they are ready to invest financial resources in creating more residencies. Physicians and health authority leaders have told me they are ready to move on creating more residencies. Together we can make this happen!

With your support I am eager to move forward on practical community based action to provide more residency positions for these young doctors who want to return to BC and complete their physician training. Attached is a presentation for your information.

I am forming a working group of interested Mayors to meet with me and scope out the practical steps to implement more residency opportunities. I will also be engaging leadership in our Health Authorities who have expressed a desire to be part of the residency solution.
I am inviting you, a member of your council or a member of your staff to join me to develop an innovative approach to bring home our BC medical students studying to become doctors in other countries.

Call me or my assistant, Jessica Wolford, at 250-387-8396 to let me know if you or a member of your team will join me in this critical enterprise to meet our future need for doctors in BC.

Sincerely,

Dr. Moira Stillwell

MLA Vancouver-Langara

Attachment
Doctors for BC, BC for Doctors

- BC can have a self sustaining supply of the kinds of doctors where we need them without costly medical school expansion.

- The sources: UBC medical student graduates, BC medical graduates studying abroad and doctors from other countries already here in BC awaiting licensing.

- There are more than 500 BC medical students studying medicine in Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and other countries.
Doctors for BC, BC for Doctors

- Completing a Canadian residency is a **must** for any medical school graduate to become a licensed physician or surgeon no matter where they studied.

- Residencies vary from 2 years for a Family Physician to several years for surgeons and specialists.

- All Canadian medical school graduates and immigrant physicians need a residency to finalize their licensure.
Doctors for BC, BC for Doctors

- Immigrant physicians and Canadian medical school graduates abroad must:
  1. Have studied at a medical school listed with FAIMER which reviews foreign medical schools;
  2. Write & pass the Medical Council of Canada Equivalency Exam, and
  3. Complete an exam called an OSCE in most cases.

- Residency placements are assigned by the Canadian Residency Matching Service (CaRMS).
Doctors for BC, BC for Doctors

- BC currently offers 19 International Medical Graduate residency positions for immigrant physicians.

- BC IMGs applying to the 1\textsuperscript{st} round of the match, must be fluent in English and pass an IMG-BC OSCE and accept a return in service obligation if successful.

- Those applying to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} round can do so with or without an IMG-BC Assessment and no return in service. However, there is no meaningful 2\textsuperscript{nd} round opportunity in BC.
The realities facing BC medical grads abroad and immigrant physicians in BC:

- 288 BC residencies is not sufficient;
- 75+ BC grads every year from medical schools abroad;
- 200+ qualified immigrant physicians are waiting;
- Canadian & USA medical graduates have full access to our residency applications.
Doctors for BC, BC for Doctors

The options for BC Medical School Students Abroad:

- Compete for the 19 IMG spots reserved for immigrant physicians from other countries (a non starter);
- Apply for a residency abroad;
- Apply for post graduate studies in the USA; and
- Apply for a residency in a province with more placements.
Doctors for BC, BC for Doctors

- Investing in residencies avoids costly expansion of BC medical school campuses.

- BC medical grads from international programs and immigrant physicians already living in BC, know our communities and their needs.

- They ALL want to practice medicine in our communities

- They are capable, highly educated and mature candidates.
Doctors for BC, BC for Doctors

Moving Forward for Positive Change:

- Increase the number of residencies, primarily in Primary Care, by at least 60 per year.

- We need an equitable, transparent and merit based approach ensuring the most qualified BC residency applicants are placed here, regardless of where they went to school.

- Mayors of BC communities are willing to invest in the cost of residencies.

- There are BC physicians and health authorities eager to deliver residency supervision and placements.

- Consider creative approaches to deliver residencies to meet the number of applicants and BC’s future needs.