



1146360

Her Worship Linda Brown
Mayor of Merritt
2185 Voght St
Merritt BC V1K 1B6

Dear Mayor Brown, Mr. Hildebrand, and Councillor Bhangu:

I am writing to thank you for meeting with me at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Convention, which took place September 23 to 27, 2019, at the Vancouver Convention Centre, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me and share a little about what is happening in your region.

In our meeting, you spoke of the recent success seen in Merritt in terms of developing an MOU with local First Nations, shared support for development of a longer-term detox centre, and the positive results seen from existing mental health and wellness services, though capacity issues are starting to arise.

You also spoke of some of the challenges your region is facing, including an escalation of RCMP reports of aggressive encounters with people experiencing mental health and substance use challenges and significant amounts of RCMP time being dedicated to transporting Merritt residents to assessment services in other cities.

With respect to issues with RCMP drop-off, I encourage you to reach out to Justine Patterson, Executive Director of the Overdose Emergency Response Centre, who will be able to provide you with information on a pilot project currently underway with Vernon RCMP. She can be reached at: Justine.Patterson@gov.bc.ca or (778) 572-2315. This project supports local RCMP members to provide facilitated referrals for people who have overdosed, or are at high risk of overdose, to an Interior Health substance use treatment nurse. I also recommend you connect with Interior Health to discuss telehealth options, which could help increase service delivery within Merritt.

I have taken the liberty of attaching a list of rural and remote mental health resources that may be of interest to you and your community.

...2



Thank you again for your input and participation. I look forward to continuing to work with you as we move forward to improve mental health and addictions services for all British Columbians.

Sincerely,

Taryn Walsh
Assistant Deputy Minister
Strategic Priorities and Initiatives



Rural & Remote Mental Health and Substance Use Services

Ensuring access through online and tele-health resources

We recognize British Columbians living in rural and remote areas are faced with unique challenges in accessing appropriate and culturally safe mental health and addictions services. Virtual care services have the potential to bridge existing gaps in service by providing timely access to appropriate interventions and helping people locate supports before they reach crisis.

To support this, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, along with the Ministry of Health, is investing in innovative technology to provide individuals and physicians with free, user-friendly access to reliable information, screening tools, and psychological support. This includes providing mental health and substance use services to rural and remote communities through mobile clinical teams, e-Mental Health, tele-health, and travel assistance programs for both patients and physicians.

e-Mental Health and Substance Use Resources

HealthLink BC: (healthlinkbc.ca or 811) provides medically-approved information on more than 5,000 health topics, including mental health and substance use

Mental Health and Substance Use Service Map: (gov.bc.ca/gov/content/mental-health-support-in-bc/map) a searchable listing of mental health and substance use resources and services, organized by community.

Mental Health and Substance Use Hub: (gov.bc.ca/gov/content/mental-health-support-in-bc) offers options for self-help, self-care, and links to resources.

BC Mental Health and Substance Use: (bcmhsus.ca) provides a network of services for BC residents across the province.

HeretoHelp: (heretohelp.bc.ca) is a project of the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information and offers resources to help people prevent and manage mental health and substance use problems.

Bounce Back: (bouncebackbc.ca or 1 866 639-0522) is an evidence-based program for adults experiencing symptoms of mild to moderate depression and anxiety. Bounce Back offers self-directed Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with over-the-phone coaching.

Additional Useful Online Resources:

(interiorhealth.ca/YourCare/MentalHealthSubstanceUse/MentalHealth/Documents/Useful%20Online%20Resources.pdf) a substantive list of online resources created by Interior Health.



Crisis Lines

310-Mental Health: call 310-MENTAL (310-6789 - no area code needed) toll-free anywhere in BC to access emotional support, information and resources specific to mental health and substance use issues.

Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC: (crisiscentre.bc.ca or 1 800 SUICIDE – 1 800 784-2433) provides emotional support to youth, adults and seniors in distress, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Kuu-us Crisis Line Society: (toll-free at 1 800 588-8717, local youth at 250-723-2040 or local adults at 250-723-4050) provides Indigenous, culturally safe 24/7 telephone crisis supports, with specific care for youth and elders.

Youth in BC (youthinbc.com or 1 866 661-3311) is a 24/7 crisis line that connects youth with support, information and resources. It also has an online chat feature available from 12pm – 1am daily.

Child and Youth Resources

erase (erase.gov.bc.ca) – Expect Respect & a Safe Education is a government website with a section on substance use with resources for educators, students, and parents

Compass Mental Health (compassbc.ca or 1 855 702 7272) a provincial phone and web-based consultation service for primary care and community providers to access evidence-based supports for children and youth living with mental health challenges and problematic substance use.

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre (keltymentalhealth.ca or 1 800 665-1822) is a free, provincial resource centre that provides information, resources, peer support and system navigation to children, youth and families across BC who are struggling with mental health and/or substance use challenges.

Foundry Online: (foundrybc.ca) a youth and young adult-centric interactive website offering self-assessments and connections to early supports. This site aligns with brick and mortar Foundry sites across BC to better integrate care for youth and young adults with mental health and substance use challenges.

Confident Parents: Thriving Kids: (cptka.inputhealth.com) is a phone-based coaching service for parents to help reduce mild to moderate anxiety and behavioural problems in children aged 3 to 12.