

Cowichan Leadership Group

Honourable Judy Darcy
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Room 346 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4

February 16, 2020

Dear Minister:

Thank you for your response to our letter dated November 1, 2019, in which we provided a proposal from our Cowichan Valley region to address the myriad issues related to addictions in our community. Our proposal represented a collective approach to dealing with the health outcomes for people with addictions, and the escalating conflict and security concerns for our residents, service providers, and the business community.

We were sorry to hear that our funding request couldn't be met, but we support your efforts to expand the Foundry centres and funding to schools for student mental health. We were pleased to learn that Cowichan Valley Youth Services is being considered for Foundry funding, and that Cowichan Tribes is receiving mental health and substance use funding. We will continue to work together in a good way to support their initiatives.

We remain concerned for the safety of our residents and service providers. At the end of December, we had two violent deaths in Duncan and then another unrelated stabbing a week later. Our community is not accustomed to violent deaths on our streets. Our homeless outreach staff is fearful of their safety at work. Other front-line workers express despair about the outlook of an epidemic that only shows signs of growing. Our residents are frustrated and angry.

We remain focused and determined to work collaboratively with you and each other to find solutions, and we will continue to advocate for greater support and coordination from our provincial government on this issue.

It is going to take all of us—all levels of government, businesses, residents, service organizations—to take on the amount of additional work that is required to solve this problem. We need support for Cowichan from the higher levels of government. We hope you and your colleagues will support our proposal.

Sincerely,
Cowichan Leadership Group
Cc: Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health