Yukon Registered Nurses Association

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VISION

Registered Nurses of Yukon promote a healthy Yukon community through caring, leadership and the advancement of nursing excellence.

MISSION

As a self-regulating profession, registered nurses of Yukon collectively and as individuals, protect the public interest by:

- *advancing nursing excellence*
- *providing leadership*
- *participating in the development of healthy public policy*
- *providing information on roles and responsibilities to the public and to colleagues*

2 August 2011

Glenn Hart
Minister of Health and Social Services
Government of Yukon
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6

Dear Minister Hart:

I am writing to recommend that a meeting of key stakeholders in the health care sector be called to discuss the challenges that currently exist regarding access to health care for Yukoners.

Problems with access to health care in the Yukon are not new – especially for those with chronic diseases and those with multiple health and social difficulties. However, this serious issue has been made more visible in the media in the last few months for a variety of reasons and deficiencies in access and gaps in service have been highlighted. Mental health services, addictions and access to primary care providers in general are obvious concerns and now I believe that there are challenges with access to obstetrical care.

Solutions or ideas to address a number of situations have recently been presented. However, some of these proposed initiatives are short term and appear to have been based on narrow consultation – for example, the plan for additional services in the Emergency Room at Whitehorse General Hospital. This does not take into account the complexity and significant overlap of some of the issues in question. A piecemeal approach to making decisions does not allow for all of the alternatives and input that could be garnered from a variety of possible and informed partners working together.

I would like to propose that appropriate partners who can provide policy input into comprehensive solutions for these health issues come together to talk openly and honestly about challenges and possible answers. This would include representatives from a variety of health professions and the public. In this way a range of informed individuals can be included in discussions where all possible solutions can be presented and duly considered. Options such as midwifery practice, nurse practitioners and interprofessional practice clinics, which are considered standard in other parts of the country, must be part of that discussion.

While these options are being discussed in various venues and work is taking place within the Department of Health and Social Services regarding some of them, these opportunities for alternative solutions have not been explored as part of a comprehensive dialogue that includes all players.

I would be pleased to discuss this proposal with you and the Yukon Registered Nurses Association would be happy to help facilitate a meeting of key representatives on this issue.

Sincerely,

Peggy Heynen

Peggy Heynen, RN
President