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**Subject:** FW: Northern Nurse Retention

**From:** Raelene Stevenson <[raelenestevenson@bcnu.org](mailto:raelenestevenson@bcnu.org)>

**Sent:** Friday, August 9, 2024 11:57 AM

**To:** cityclerk <[cityclerk@princegeorge.ca](mailto:cityclerk@princegeorge.ca)>

**Subject:** Northern Nurse Retention

To Mayor and Council,

I am reaching out today to request a letter of support for the nurses working in Prince George that have been excluded from the Ministry of Health's current retention plan, known as the Provincial Rural Retention Incentive. The majority of rural and remote locations within the north have been offered, and are currently receiving, this quarterly incentive to retain nurses within their communities. Prince George was left off of this list as it was deemed neither remote, nor rural, despite the fact that some of our departments, like the UHNBC Emergency Department, remain at a 70% vacancy rate in staffing levels. The level of these vacancies greatly impacts our ability to provide medical services to our community and the ability to retain other medical professionals wanting to work and live here as well. This is not to negate the overwhelming need for recognizing and supporting rural/remote nurses. The letter of support is meant to equally recognize the nurses that are currently working in severely understaffed facilities servicing the north, regardless of the city population or location. When the outer lying regions are unable to maintain staffing levels, they are able to close their facilities and go on diversion.

These are the number of times rural facilities have had to close/divert patients here in the north (stats inclusive of Jan - July 15th, 2024) Chetwynd 24, Dawson Creek 3, Dease Lake 4, Fort Nelson 6, Fort St. John 7, Fort St. James 3, Hazelton 5, Kitimat 34, Mackenzie 8, Masset 28, McBride 1, Prince Rupert 15. When these facilities close, a large portion of the time, the patients are then sent to their closest open site, or Prince George. With our facility serving as the only non-refusal site in the northern part of the province it can become very overwhelming very quickly.

We are attempting to gather additional letters of support from varied community members, colleagues, and local businesses to ensure that nurses in Prince George are equally recognized for their hard work and dedication, but also to act as a retention strategy to avoid further vacancies within Prince George facilities.

I appreciate your consideration, and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,  
Raelene Stevenson

Raelene Stevenson  
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BC Nurses' Union

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*The BCNU head office in Burnaby is located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the [xʷməθkʷəy̓əm \(Musqueam\)](#), [Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw \(Squamish\)](#) and [səlilwətaʔ \(Tsleil-Waututh\)](#) nations whose historical relationships to the land continue to this day.*