



NOTICE OF MOTION

Date: September 29, 2024
To: Mayor and Council
From: Councillor Garth Frizzell and Councillor Trudy Klassen
Subject: Support Development of Psychiatric Care Facility in Prince George
Attachments: N/A

The date for this motion to be considered is at the October 21, 2024 regular council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

That City Council advocates that the provincial government establish a secure psychiatric care facility program, with appropriate capitalization and ongoing operational funding immediately, and locate a facility in Prince George BC.

DISCUSSION:

The deinstitutionalization that characterized mental health care at the end of the 20th Century in British Columbia was not successful in providing improved mental care for those in need. This failure was due in part to barriers such as: insufficient funding, fragmented services, and lack of legislative support. Challenges like these led to delays and superficial efforts, such as stricter admission criteria, which overwhelmed BC's regional hospitals and community services.¹

As noted by Dr. Barb Kane in her petition for the establishment of a secure psychiatric care facility in Northern BC:

Northern communities in British Columbia, Canada have been experiencing a critical lack of access to the highest level of psychiatric care. This lack of resources is putting unnecessary strain on the residents of these communities, their families, local police services, and hospitals with increased homelessness, drug use and street crime. It is our responsibility to ensure those who need care have proper access.

We must advocate for the development of long-term secure psychiatric services, such as a psychiatric hospital or an equivalent facility. A concerted effort to improve the accessibility of psychiatric services is not just beneficial

¹ Ronquillo, C. "Deinstitutionalization of Mental Health Care in British Columbia: A Critical Examination of the Role of Riverview Hospital from 1950 to 2000". The Proceedings of the 18th Annual History of Medicine Days, March 6th and 7th, 2009 University of Calgary, Faculty of Medicine, Calgary, AB. p. 11-26 <https://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstreams/f41fcd40-2faf-425e-96c6-ade8f6b34eb2/download>

to the affected individuals - it will contribute to the overall health and stability of our communities. We have seen that no amount of community resources will be adequate in place of a long term secure facility².

In Fall of 2024, commitments were made by provincial nominees of different parties as part of the lead up to the provincial election. These involved the establishment of such the critical psychiatric care detailed above, but did not provide business cases, estimates, feasibility, or a commitment to dates for project initiation, much less discussion of operational funding, staffing, etc..

This cannot be an issue that is promised with little thought and abandoned for other priorities. As a resolution of Council of the City of Prince George, we will continue to advocate for such facilities until they are in place.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Garth Frizzell



Councillor Trudy Klassen

² Kane, Dr. Barb. Develop Psychiatric Hospital for Northern BC Communities:
<https://www.change.org/p/develop-psychiatric-hospital-for-northern-bc-communities>
Document Number: 731766