

Whereas every year hundreds of British Columbians are diagnosed with chronic conditions and diseases that necessitate specialized medical treatment requiring long term stays near but not in hospital, there are disparities in health outcomes between rural and urban patients;

And whereas residents of rural and remote communities in British Columbia requiring specialized medical treatment for complex care in urban centres face significant challenges

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including high travel and accommodation costs, the psychosocial impacts of healthcare away from home and community, the loss of income during treatment period, and increasingly limited availability of affordable accommodations, hotel rooms, or short term rentals;

And whereas the Province of British Columbia, reflected in its 2024 mandate, is committed to both improved health care for British Columbians when they need it, and attainable and affordable housing to deliver more homes for people faster:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM advocate for the Provincial Government of British Columbia to alleviate the financial and logistical burdens associated with seeking specialized medical care far from home by developing and implementing comprehensive policies and programs to assist patients needing to travel for healthcare, and ensure that patients have access to affordable, comfortable, and convenient accommodations;

And be it further resolved that UBCM request the Province consider and implement ways to deliver and dedicate subsidized accommodations in and adjacent to large urban health centres specifically purposed for longer term specialized medical treatment.

Comments:

The Resolutions Committee notes that the UBCM membership has considered resolutions which address the transportation challenges faced by medical patients in rural and remote areas to access health care (2020-EB75, 2018-B16, 2014-B9, 2012-B38).

The membership also endorsed resolution 2015-B69 which asked the provincial government to provide support, either through direct funding, initiatives, or policy, to organizations that are undertaking the development of lands and other hard assets in the establishment of rural out-patient accommodation.

The Committee also notes that the membership has supported resolutions seeking improved and more equitable access to health care services in rural and remote areas of the province and funding for medical travel if services are not available near a patient's home (2022-EB15, 2019-B62, 2017-B43, 2016-B44, 2016-B124, 2014-B130, 2013-B43, 2013-B44, 2013-B45, 2013-B46, 2013-B47, 2012-B38, 2012-B39, 2012-B91, 2012-B93, 2012-B103, 2011-B60, 2011-B61, 2010-B43, 2010-B44, 2010-B112, 2009-B148, 2008-B49, 2006-B48, 2006-B50, 2006-B154, 2006-B156, 2005-B146). The UBCM Executive endorsed referred resolution 2020-NR64 which asked the Province for a strategy to expand rural and remote community health care services.

Recommendation: Endorse