



August 4, 2022

Concerned Citizens of Boyle and Area

RE: HEALTHCARE SERVICES DISRUPTIONS

Village of Boyle Council has received numerous concerns regarding the healthcare services disruptions and we share those concerns as well. We can NOT sit idle and allow this to happen without fighting.

Village council has been working on every angle to address this very serious problem. We have been writing letters, making phone calls, attending meetings, calling meetings with AHS and meeting with the Minister of Health along with other Ministers and the Premier.

I have recently attended meetings with the Health Minister, AHS leaders and leaders of other communities facing the same issues.

The unfortunate reality is that there is no easy fix, and the entire Country is facing the same problems with a lack of nurses and doctors. My reply to AHS is that my concern lies 100% with my community and I can assure you with 100% confidence that we are doing everything in our power to fix this ASAP.

The Village of Boyle in partnership with Athabasca County has secured two apartments in Boyle solely for locum doctors and nurses. The one apartment has been here for many years and the other one was approved a couple of months ago to deal specifically with today's issue. These apartments are fully furnished and have all of the modern amenities to make it extremely easy for locums to say yes to a posting in Boyle.

Unfortunately, doctors and nurses fall under provincial authority and municipalities do not have any say or control over them. What we can do is deal with our provincial government to make sure we have adequate services in our communities. At this time, we are told that Lac La Biche is short seven doctors, Athabasca is short four, and we are short an RN nurse. The surrounding communities and the increased lake traffic has caused our doctors to be extremely busy with little or no notice of it happening. Our hospital needs one RN and two LPNs to stay open according to provincial law and we are unable to do that on a daily basis at this time because of a shortage of RN nurses.

AHS has sent us a letter assuring us that the hospital is in NO danger of closing and that this is a rare circumstance that they are trying extremely hard to work through.

When I met with the Minister of Health and the Northern Region Director for AHS I expressed to them our communities fear, anger, and general concern for our hospital, and they agreed. They are working on multiple fixes and assure me that we will eventually get services back to normal.

The biggest hurdle right now is that so many provinces and other countries are facing the same situation so bringing in trained individuals from around the world is not an easy thing to do right now. The Minister and AHS officials are travelling all around Alberta and meeting with community leaders to try and find ideas and ways to get through the shortages and keep our health facilities open and running normally.

Your concern gives me confidence that our concerns are warranted and supported. We are staying in contact with our MLA, AHS, and the Minister to make sure we are looked after first. Our hospital is VERY important to the Village and surrounding communities. The Reeve, Mayor of Athabasca and myself are meeting regularly to stay on top of this terrible situation.

Please feel free to reach out anytime.

Mayor Colin Derko &
Village of Boyle Council