ALBERTA

HOSPITAL AND SURGICAL HEALTH SERVICES

Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary-South East

AR 36

Her Worship Myrna Lanctot
Mayor
Village of Donnelly
Box 200
Donnelly AB T0H 1G0
cao@donnelly.ca

Dear Mayor Lanctot,

The Honourable Dan Williams, Minister of Municipal Affairs, forwarded me a copy of your letter regarding Emergency Medical Services (EMS) staffing in McLennan. As Minister of Hospital and Surgical Health Services, I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

I am pleased to report that several initiatives are currently underway to address EMS staffing challenges in McLennan. Alberta Health Services (AHS) is participating in career fairs across the Peace District to support recruitment efforts. AHS has also introduced rural-specific recruitment strategies, such as the EMS Cadet Program, which hires emergency medical responder (EMR) students to support ambulance teams while they complete their education. In exchange for this opportunity, students sign a one-year return-of-service agreement to work in the community once they have completed the EMR program. In addition, free housing is available for AHS EMS employees working 24-hour core-flex shifts.

Local and provincial bursaries are also available for EMS students to help cover tuition and other school-related expenses. Additionally, northern incentives are being offered to encourage EMS students and recent graduates to serve in rural communities.

Alberta's Health Workforce Strategy is supported by a significant investment in health care education that will add more than 3,600 seats in Alberta's post-secondary health care programs, including paramedicine.

In January 2022, the Government of Alberta established the Alberta EMS Provincial Advisory Committee (AEPAC) to explore issues and develop recommendations to ensure a strong and sustainable EMS system for all Albertans. One of its subcommittees focused on workforce engagement and supports, producing recommendations designed to attract and retain paramedics in the EMS system. Those recommendations were informed by input from frontline staff through surveys and telephone town halls. Stakeholders such as the Health Sciences Association of Alberta also made the recommendations. The government accepted all recommendations from the final AEPAC report, and they are being implemented.

Alberta's government also commissioned an independent review of the paramedic workforce to better understand the challenges within the EMS system. The study, which is under review, included a provincewide survey of paramedics that explored mental health support, retention strategies, workforce mobility, educational capacity, future demands, and other topics. It aimed to identify key areas for improvement, including addressing workplace barriers and fostering a culture where workers feel supported.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I commend your dedication to supporting the health and well-being of your community.

Sincerely,

Honourable Matt Jones
Minister of Hospital and Surgical Health Services

cc: Honourable Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services
Honourable Minister Dan Williams, Minister of Municipal Affairs
Honourable Todd Loewen, MLA, Central Peace-Notley