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May 19, 2026

Ref # 22794

Kevin Murdoch, Chair
Capital Regional Hospital District Board

Via email: kmurdoch@crd.ca

Dear Kevin:

Thank you for your April 30, 2026 letter to Kathy MacNeil, President & CEO of Island Health regarding a needs assessment for long-term care for Salt Spring Island. Kathy asked that I respond on her behalf in my capacity as Vice President for the portfolio which includes long term care and more recently, accountability for capital funding and initiatives.

Island Health is grateful for the support of the Capital Regional Hospital District (CRHD) in developing and co-funding health care infrastructure on the South Island. The partnership between regional governments, property taxpayers, the Ministry of Health and local foundations is crucial to bringing complex and high-cost health capital projects to fruition.

Island Health fully recognizes the growing demand for long-term care beds on the South Island. These pressures are not unique to this region and are being experienced throughout our service region, throughout BC and nationally. At present, the fiscal and capital planning environment is highly constrained, and some planned long-term care projects in high-need communities that were well underway in the planning process, like Campbell River, are not advancing at this time.

Island Health continues to assess long-term care needs as part of its regional priority-setting processes. This includes consideration of factors such as wait times, bed ratios by age and population, facility conditions, demographic trends, bed utilization, and community social and economic determinants of health.

In addition to Campbell River there are other communities within Island Health with significant needs. Salt Spring Island does have a recognized need for additional bed capacity, although other communities such as the Western Communities and Cowichan have been identified with higher priority needs. Salt Spring Island has the longest length of stay in long-term care in Island Health, and based on this data, work is underway to ensure adequate and appropriate community health services supports are available on the island to support residents to live well longer in their homes.

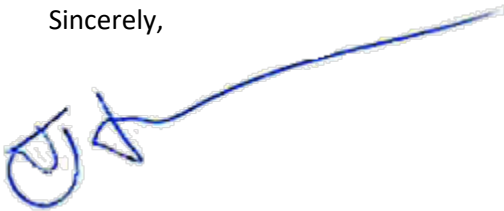
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With the current fiscal constraints, Island Health is focusing its limited planning and capital resourcing on projects which are already prioritized, funded, authorized and positioned to proceed through the Province of BC capital planning process. Advancing new major capital projects requires authorization from the Ministry of Infrastructure, and at this time there is no such authorization for a Salt Spring Island long-term care facility. While we recognize and appreciate potential external funding and partnership, these do not replace the need for provincial approvals.

Although we are not in a position to initiate a Salt Spring Island-specific long-term care needs assessment at this time, we will continue to consider long-term care needs through our regional planning processes and clinical services planning, and value ongoing engagement with the CRHD.

I appreciate the CRHD's continued interest in supporting health care improvements on the South Island and look forward to our discussion on June 5. While the focus of this meeting, and your request, is Oak Bay Lodge, I anticipate this will be an opportunity to discuss other priority needs and continue our ongoing dialogue.

Sincerely,



James Hanson
Vice President
Community Clinical Operations and Support Programs

cc: Capital Regional Hospital District Board crdboard@crd.bc.ca
Ted Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD trobbsins@crd.bc.ca
Kevin Lorette, General Manager, Housing, Planning & Protective Services, CRD klorette@crd.bc.ca>