



April 16, 2020

Dear Minister Darcy,

It's always a pleasure for us to be able to interact and engage with you. We have been so fortunate in our relationship with you and your staff over the years and we have appreciated your willingness to be part of our events and engaging us in meaningful dialogue. The truth is, it's not a proper nursing awards ceremony without our favourite emcee!

We write this letter as an expression of gratitude to you. This gratitude extends on many levels but in this context, we want to acknowledge the work you have done with respect to supporting those individuals during the COVID pandemic who may be at increased risk of overdose, withdrawal or other potential harms related to substance use. As you know, the issue of substance use and at-risk, vulnerable and marginalized populations is one that NNPBC has done significant work in. Our recent issues brief on [COVID-19 and At Risk & Marginalized Populations](#) underscores our commitment to ensuring that vulnerable populations are supported particularly in the context of the dual public health emergencies occurring right now. As nurses in support of harm reduction and safe supply, we advocate the creation and maintenance of pragmatic interventions to address the toxic drug supply and ensure people can continue to access pharmaceutical grade substances beyond this emergency period.

NNPBC also applauds the increase in funding to mental health services during COVID-19 that was announced on the 9th of April. This pandemic has been a stressful time for everyone and ensuring that people have access to and are supported in their mental health is paramount as you well know. As nurses, and specifically as Registered Psychiatric Nurses, we are acutely aware that access to counselling and other forms of online support services will be necessary as the days of this pandemic wear on and the financial, emotional and health stresses take their toll.

Please know that Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC is here to support your work and ensure that we not only end any stigma that still exists around mental health but that we continue to create programs and services that allow for people to access services more easily and readily, irrespective of their socio-economic status. As we have heard during this pandemic, we are all in this together, and we truly feel that it is through collaborative relationships and dialogue that we will continue to open the doors around mental health.

With sincerest appreciation,

Jacquolynne Keath

Board Chair, RPN Council President

Tess Kroeker

Board Member, RPN Councillor