



BC budget invests in health and social services, but workforce challenges need attention

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For Immediate Release

Health Sciences Association of BC says today's provincial budget provides important investments in health care and social services, but workforce challenges need attention.

HSA represents 18,000 highly trained specialists working in diagnostic MRI, sonography and lab testing, physiotherapy, social work, radiation therapy, pharmacy, early childhood development and many other health science and social service professions.

"We are pleased to see that this budget continues to make critical investments in health care and social services while also introducing affordability measures that will benefit British Columbians today and for years to come," said HSA President Val Avery. "New funding for hospitals, child and youth mental health services, and team-based primary care is welcome news - but we need to ensure that we have the health science professionals in place who are critical to the success of these programs."

The majority of Ministry of Health-designated "priority professions" that have labour market challenges - including recruitment and retention - are health science professions. HSABC continues to advocate for urgent action to address the shortage of health science professionals in the health system and the child development sector, including the expansion of post-secondary training spaces.

"We are hopeful that new post-secondary and health funding will support immediate solutions to address workforce challenges facing the health science professions," Avery added.

In the submission to the Budget 2019 consultation, HSABC also recommended:

- A Community Health Centre funding stream to ensure the provincial expansion of this team-based primary care model with a focus addressing the determinants of health and reducing use of more expensive acute care services;
- Increased funding for the provincial network of Child Development Centres to address long waits for early intervention services for children with disabilities; and,
- Increased funding for the Employment Standards Branch and Labour Relations Board in order to ensure fairness and economic security for workers.

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