

February 21, 2017

BC Nurses Evaluate Modest Provincial Budget

VANCOUVER – The BC Coalition of Nursing Associations (BCCNA or “The Coalition”), which represents the four types of nurses that practice in B.C. and Nurse Educators, is satisfied with the modest budget laid down in Victoria today and looks forward to the opportunities and benefits it will afford all British Columbians in achieving better health and balanced living, the Coalition announced earlier today.

“We have looked at this year’s budget carefully, not only with an eye to how it will impact the nurses we represent, but more importantly, how it will impact patients and families across the province,” said Zak Matieschyn, BCCNA Board Member and ARNBC President. “Although we always anticipate an increase in the base health budget, we are pleased to see significant reductions in MSP premiums which will benefit all British Columbians, and particularly vulnerable families.”

Most recently, the Coalition has focused significant attention on supporting the nursing community and all those involved through the ongoing opioid crisis. Government has already committed nearly \$100 million to resolving this crisis, and some of the announcements made today, particularly around youth mental health, will help to stem some of the root causes that lead to drug use, homelessness and poor health.

“Our nurses, other health care providers, first responders, users and community workers are operating under enormous stress as they adjust to the current opioid crisis,” said Kathleen Fyvie, BCCNA Board Member and BCNPA President. “As much as government has done to support innovative approaches to managing this situation, we know that an enormous amount of work remains if we are going to successfully address this public health emergency. Every contribution, whether policy, funding or programs is valued.”

BCCNA recognizes that many of the social investments made through this budget, including a decrease in MSP premiums, an additional \$165 for children and youth mental health supports, and funding for infrastructure projects will be particularly helpful to vulnerable families, and will help improve health outcomes that occur when social determinants of health are not met.

Formed in 2013, the BCCNA is focused on bringing the professional voice of nursing to public policy discussions. The Coalition believes that dialogue and interaction can and should be positive and professional and that the voice of nursing in the media and to the public can be reflective of the leadership, expertise, professionalism and compassion that nurses demonstrate every day.

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