

Honourable Nate Horner
MLA for Drumheller-Stettler
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Email: Drumheller.Stettler@assembly.ab.ca

Subject: Request for Policy Review: Bringing Health Services to Alberta Schools

Dear MLA Horner,

I hope this letter finds you well. Thank you for your dedication to serving our community. As a concerned parent and resident of the Drumheller-Stettler constituency, I am reaching out to advocate for an important policy change within Alberta Health Services: enabling health professionals, such as mental health therapists, speech pathologists, and occupational therapists, to provide services directly within schools.

The Problem: Challenges Families Face Under the Current System

Many Alberta families, including my own, face significant challenges accessing vital health services for their children. Under the existing model, parents must take time off work to transport their children to clinics or hospitals during school hours for appointments with speech pathologists, occupational therapists, or mental health professionals.

This system creates disruptions on several levels:

- **For children**, it interrupts their education, requiring them to miss valuable classroom time.
- **For parents**, it imposes financial and logistical burdens, particularly for those without flexible work schedules or adequate transportation.
- **For schools**, it presents challenges in coordinating support for students who return to class after missing lessons for offsite services.

These barriers leave many families struggling to access the care their children need, which can delay critical interventions and hinder developmental progress.

The Proposed Solution: School-Based Health Services

To address these issues, I am asking for your support in advocating for a policy change that would allow health professionals to provide their services directly at schools. By integrating these vital services into the educational environment, children would be able to access care more seamlessly without sacrificing learning time.

This model is already being successfully implemented in many Alberta School Divisions *at the cost of educational dollars*. It ensures that children who require health interventions can receive them in a familiar, accessible setting while families are spared the additional stress of travelling to external clinics.

The Benefits of Bringing Services to Schools

A shift to school-based health services would yield numerous benefits:

1. **Increased Accessibility for Children:** Schools serve as central hubs in communities, making services more convenient for all families, particularly those in rural areas or without reliable transportation.
2. **Reduced Strain on Parents:** Parents would no longer have to navigate complex schedules or forgo income by taking time off work, improving family well-being.
3. **Better Integration of Education and Health:** By collaborating directly with educators, health professionals can tailor their support to address each child's unique needs in the classroom, leading to more effective interventions.

Call to Action: Supporting Alberta Families

I respectfully request your support in reviewing this policy proposal and advocating for its adoption. By championing this change, you can help ensure that Alberta remains a leader in family-centric policies that prioritize the health, education, and well-being of our children.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued service to our community.

Sincerely,

CC: Minister of Health Adriane LaGrange, Minister of Education Demetrios Nicolaides