



April 8th, 2015

Minister Terry Lake
Ministry of Health
Province of BC

Dear Minister Lake:

We are writing to express our strong support for the “Proposal for Change - Supporting Residents in Care”, a document submitted to you by the Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils.

Providing a collective, independent voice for persons of importance to seniors is essential for the well-being of residents in care within every care facility within British Columbia. That voice must also be in addition to the voice historically given directly to residents in the form of resident councils. As the Provincial Ombudsperson stated in *The Best of Care: Getting it right for seniors in British Columbia (Part 2)*, “It is important for care facilities to have both resident and family councils because family members and residents have different perspectives, experiences and priorities. Having both types of councils increases the likelihood that creative solutions to problems will be discovered. Keeping resident and family councils separate ensures that the distinct and unique concerns of both are heard.”

We also recognize the critical need for facilities to assist family councils in sustaining their membership numbers. Family Councils can be a tremendous source of support, information and ideas for friends and family new to the residential care experience. As family and friends, many of whom are elderly themselves, accompany their loved one into the residential care experience, they must be introduced to the benefits and support that comes with belonging to a family council.

Additionally, the importance of establishing regional associations cannot be overstated. It gives family and friends of residents the opportunity to network, share ideas and create solutions to



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Honourary Patron: Her Honour, the Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia

help residents age most successfully while in care. Those ideas can help both in terms of improvements for individual residents as well as improvements that are more systemic.

In over twenty five years of supporting family caregivers, we have heard thousands of stories related to the successes and failures of a loved one living in residential care. Most success stories are tied to the family member feeling like they are a valued, knowledgeable partner in care. We are encouraged by the Ministry's shift toward patient and family centered care and supporting Family Councils is one important way to put this philosophy into action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barb MacLean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Barb" and last name "MacLean" clearly legible.

Barb MacLean
Executive Director
Family Caregivers Network of British Columbia

