

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
MLA Cumberland North



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Nova Scotia Legislature

January 30, 2025
The Honourable Barbara Adams, M.L.A.
Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care
Deputy Premier
Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care
1740 Granville Street
P.O. Box 2065
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2Z1

Dear Minister Adams,

Thank you for agreeing to serve the people of Nova Scotia as Deputy Premier, Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care, and Minister of Military Relations. Your dedication to improving the lives of seniors across the province is highly respected. .
Governing is about people. On November 26th, 2024, Nova Scotians entrusted us with a mandate to shape a brighter future. We share a belief in the strength of our communities, the ingenuity of our industries, and the rich heritage that defines Cumberland County. Together, we will harness this potential to foster economic growth, improve healthcare, and elevate the quality of life for all residents.

Cumberland County stands on the precipice of tremendous opportunity. By investing in our people, supporting innovation, and ensuring sustainable development, we can unlock prosperity and lead Nova Scotia into a new era of progress. Our collective success hinges on collaboration, bold action, and a steadfast commitment to addressing the unique needs of our communities.

As Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care, your leadership will be pivotal in advancing the initiatives that matter most to the people of Cumberland County. I expect you to work closely with your colleagues and community partners to deliver tangible results. Your department's work will reflect our shared vision of a prosperous, inclusive, and thriving Nova Scotia.

Specifically, I ask that you prioritize:

1. Supporting the establishment of a Veterans Walk-in Clinic to address the unique healthcare needs of veterans in our region. This is an issue that the PC party has supported in the past and the Premier has supported in the Legislature by voting in favour of this from a Notice of Motion I tabled in the past. Unfortunately no progress has been made and veterans are feeling discouraged.
2. Executing the plans for the development of new single-bed long-term care rooms and ensuring policies are in place to prevent the separation of couples in care facilities.
3. Increasing the Seniors' Care Grant program to provide greater assistance with household services, enabling seniors to live independently and with dignity. Explore depositing the money directly into the bank accounts or sending the cheques automatically to seniors that are considered low-income. This would remove a large bureaucratic cost and make it easier for all seniors.
4. Currently $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ of the acute care beds at Cumberland Regional are filled with patients awaiting Long term care beds. This is contributing to **overcapacity** issues at the hospital and decreased moral for the nursing and medical staff. Ensuring there are enough long term care beds to meet the needs is attainable. I am encouraged to know that Centennial Villa beds are being transitioned to level 2 to help meet the need. Another opportunity is expanding beds at East Cumberland Lodge in Pugwash. They currently have 73 beds and would like to expand to have 100. The addition of 27 beds would surely help to meet the overall need.

The new CAO at ECL in Pugwash is certainly a top professional and I would like to have the opportunity to introduce you to her in the coming months. Please consider visiting Pugwash and East Cumberland Lodge. They are a LTC facility that exceeds standards of care and are an example of how to lead in the sector.

5. I assume someone in the department is working on current and forecasted future needs of long term care beds based on demographics. Is this information available to me and my staff?

I know that healthcare needs major improvements. Despite the huge changes needed, I do believe having excellence in healthcare is attainable with continued efforts and shared goals. I want to work with you and your staff to shorten the length of wait time for a long term care bed. You have a willing partner with me and my staff.

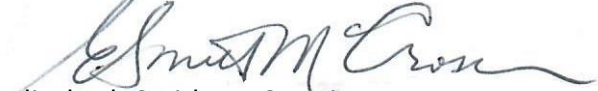
6. **Changes are needed as soon as possible with Continuing care and VON in Cumberland County.** Currently VON is the only agency that is approved for Continuing

care to use for homecare and nursing services. VON continues to have staffing shortages and this is resulting in patients having inconsistent care. In many situations this can be life threatening. It is a real problem. While there is a program available that patients can hire directly and the department reimburses, many patients do not have the cash flow to do so and the ceiling for payment is too low. Patients should be able to offer the same wage as what the department approves VON for to provide the same service. Also other agencies must be approved so that Continuing care has other options to provide care to patients in their home.

I would like to request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss how we can collaborate on these priorities. A stronger Cumberland North will lead to a stronger Nova Scotia, and together, we can lay the foundation for lasting success. Your mandate will be shaped by the voices and needs of our citizens. I expect you to engage regularly with the people of Cumberland County, ensuring that our policies and programs reflect their aspirations and address their concerns.

I look forward to working with you to build a stronger, more vibrant Cumberland County. Together, we will seize the opportunities before us and create lasting positive change for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
MLA for Cumberland North

CC: Deputy Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care