

**Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
MLA Cumberland North**



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Députée Cumberland North**

Nova Scotia Legislature

January 21, 2022

Hon. Barbara Adams
Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care
1741 Brunswick Street, 2nd Floor
Halifax, NS
B3J 2A8

Dear Minister Barbara Adams:

Greetings from Cumberland County. I hope you had a safe and enjoyable Holiday Season.

Thank you for your service to the people of Nova Scotia, especially your leadership for the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care.

As Member of the Legislative Assembly for Cumberland North, I am always looking for ways to improve the lives of the people I represent. I am requesting a meeting with you to discuss the needs and priorities identified below.

The Capital Plan has not yet been released and budget consultations are underway for all departments and agencies. I see this as an opportune time to communicate some of the needs of Cumberland North. It is a critical time in our province, and it is very important to acknowledge the difference in needs in each community.

I think your department has a unique opportunity to lead the way in creating cooperation and collaboration between our maritime neighbours and advancing our region for our mutual betterment.

I am looking for your assistance to advance priorities related to your department including:

- Cumberland North has three long-term care facilities, and two of them are in desperate need of replacement. Gables Lodge is located in Amherst and owned by Gem Health and East Cumberland Lodge in Pugwash is owned by the Municipality of Cumberland. Both buildings are old, have few single rooms and are in need of replacement.
- Residential Care Facilities are quite abundant here in Cumberland North. I ask that you take the recommendation 5.3 from the Expert Panel on Long-Term Care and investigate the use of RDF by repurposing vacant licensed beds to provide convalescent and rehabilitation care.
- The Expert Panel on Long Term Care Recommendation 4.2 is needed. The current operations involving continuing care is not effective in efficiently getting patients moved from hospital to a long-term care facility.

- Further to that: pre-pandemic, I had expressed frustration with continuing care and the delays in getting paperwork completed to facilitate the moving of a patient from hospital to a LTC facility. There is no urgency from continuing care despite the huge demand for hospital acute care beds. I encourage the Minister and department to look at other models in other provinces to create improved efficiency. For example, NB has a policy that the government does not pay a LTC facility for empty beds after 5 days. NB does not have a continuing care level of bureaucracy and hospital discharge planners work directly with LTC facilities.
- In the Fall Session of the Legislature, I tabled a Bill to Amend the Adult Protection Act. Currently the Adult Protection office does not effectively "protect" adults. I know that this bill doesn't fall precisely under your mandate, but as with many facets of health care and social needs, they all apply. Changes are needed to ensure that when doctors, law enforcement and other community members call with concerns of an adult needing protection that assessments are done and action is taken to protect the adult. I have been told by physicians, police officers, and community non-profit agencies that the current practice is to ignore the concerns and in almost every circumstance, a call does not result in an assessment being done.
- Continuing Care Assistants must receive higher wages. The work they do demands it and in order to retain them they will need to receive improved remuneration and benefits. We all want the best suited people to stay in this field to provide care to our aging loved ones.
- Thank you for the Seniors Care Grant. This will help many Seniors in need. I encourage your department to continue to support seniors, especially those who want to stay in their family homes but cannot afford the ongoing maintenance costs of an aging home. There may be opportunities to explore helping seniors to rent rooms which would help bring in revenue as well help to address the housing shortage that most all areas of Nova Scotia are experiencing.

Your department will play an integral part in advancing Nova Scotia and our Maritime Region to become competitive internationally and achieve economic independence in our own country. Nova Scotia will become less reliant on federal transfers. Cooperation among all elected officials in all three levels of government will strengthen our ability to adapt post pandemic.

I formally request a meeting with you so we can discuss these issues further and come up with some solutions that acknowledge and address the different challenges faced in some areas of our province.

Given our aging population, working together is the best way to move forward.

Thank you for your leadership as Minister and I look forward to working with you in these important areas.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin

Cc: Dr. Stephen Ellis, MP Cumberland Colchester; Mayor Murray Scott, Cumberland County; Mayor David Kogon, Town of Amherst