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Dr. S. Page

**Dr. G. Mannheimer
Dr. K. Maslowska**

Dr. B. Johnson

February 23, 2020

Regional District of the East Kootenays
Attn: Susan Clovechok, RDEK Area F Director
Columbia Valley Office
1164 Windermere Loop Road
Invermere, BC V0A1K3

Dear Susan Clovechok
RDEK Area F Director

Re: Closure of Fairmont Airport

The physicians of Invermere Medical Clinic would like to vigorously support any efforts to maintain the Fairmont airport and reinforce the importance of this facility for the provision of medical services in this area.

Invermere is a small rural town and the medical professionals in it support a considerable local and transient holiday-maker population. The geography of our valley is such that emergency medical evacuations are often a necessity be it by road or air.

With the concerning reduction in access to facilities in Calgary which is traditionally facilitated by rotary aircraft through STARS, we are seeing a significant increase in fixed wing medical evacuations. Invermere Airport is not able to handle the sized aircraft required for these missions and the only facility

that is capable is Fairmont. Closure of this facility would have a devastating impact on our ability to transfer critically ill patients to higher levels of care.

It is also worth mentioning that BC Ambulance, the provincial team responsible for medical evacuations do not have any dedicated rotary air options for the East Kootenays and if this closure were to proceed, would commit our critically ill patients to all be ambulated to Cranbrook Airport for evacuation. This would have the effect of not only an unnecessary delay in definitive care but also a further strain on our physicians, nurses and ambulance ground teams who would have to escort these patients, pulling them away from our site.

We are very concerned about the impact that this decision will have on emergency medical services in the East Kootenays and would fully endorse any efforts made to try and maintain the airport.

I appreciate your ongoing efforts to this.

With kind regards,

Dr. Gareth Mannheimer



Dr. Shannon Page



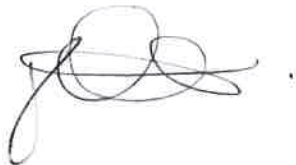
Dr. Karoline Maslowska



Dr. Bruce Johnson



Dr. Jane Fleet





February 24, 2020

Regional District of the East Kootenay
Attn: Susan Clovechok, RDEK Area F Director
Columbia Valley Office
1164 Windermere Loop Road
Invermere, BC V0A 1K3

Dear Susan Clovechok
RDEK Area F Director

Re: Closure of Fairmont Airport

The Invermere and District Hospital physician team would like to vigorously support all endeavors to help maintain the Fairmont airport in the East Kootenays and reinforce the importance of this facility for the provision of emergency medical services in the area.

Invermere and District Hospital is a small rural facility with a disproportionately busy emergency department compared to smaller hospitals in the province. Consequently, the hospital provides medical care to a considerable local and visiting tourist population. The geography, weather and subsequent transportation access to our valley is such that emergency medical evacuations are frequent occurrences be it by road or air.

The reduced access to high level facilities in Calgary by rotary aircraft has resulted in significant increases in fixed wing aircraft medical evacuations. As a consequence of its size, Invermere Airport is not able to handle the aircraft required for these missions and is unable to support nighttime flights. The only facility that is capable is Fairmont. Closure of this facility would have a devastating impact on our ability to transfer critically ill patients to higher levels of care.

BC Ambulance Services lack any dedicated rotary air-craft options for the East Kootenays. Should this closure proceed, the consequence would be that our most vulnerable and time sensitive patients would require road transfers to Cranbrook Airport for evacuation. This unnecessary delay in definitive care would have the added impact of further straining our physicians, nurses and ambulance ground teams who would have to escort these patients, pulling

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them away from our site. It would also certainly make recruitment of further medical staff more difficult.

We are deeply concerned about the impact that this decision will have on emergency medical services in the East Kootenays and would fully endorse any efforts made to try and maintain the Fairmont airport.

I appreciate your ongoing attention to this.

With kind regards,

Dr. Gareth Mannheimer
Chief of Staff
Invermere & District Hospital

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