**Participate in Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils letter writing campaign** to convince the Ministry of Health to create guarantees for the voice of family councils in long term
care

Send a letter to Minister Dix by December 16 asking him to:
\*       Implement the recommendations made by the Vancouver Island
Association of Family Councils in their "Proposal for Change"
\*       Work with the Seniors Advocate to create a provincial association of
long-term care and assisted living resident and family councils

Below are emails for Adrian Dix and other decision makers, and four sample letters. If you require more information please contact Kim Slater kcslater@shaw.ca

**Contact information -**

To:

Health Minister Dix – HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca

CC:

Premier Horgan – premier@gov.bc.ca

Isobel Mackenzie, BC Seniors Advocate – info@seniorsadvocate.bc.ca

Teri Collins, ADM Health Services – teri.collins@gov.bc.ca

Sue Bedford, Director, Community Care Licensing – sue.bedford@gov.bc.ca

Danielle Prpich, ED Community Care Support Services – danielle.prpich@gov.bc.ca

* **Sample Letter #1**

**Dear Minister Dix:**

I’m writing to ask you to implement the “Proposal for Change”, submitted by the Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils (VIAFC) , and to work with the Seniors Advocate to create the “Provincial Association of Family Councils”.

We have watched long term care lurch from crisis to crisis in BC for far too long. Now that the COVID crisis has revealed many of the shortcomings in long term care, it is distressing to see that the solutions seem to be suggestions that family members have attempted to voice for years. It’s even more distressing to know that the Ministry of Health has not supported that voice as laid out in the VIAFC “Proposal for Change” by ensuring additional regulation~~s~~ are implemented to define its important role in long term care.

That family voice must be guaranteed for independent family councils in every long term care facility in BC, and the Ministry of Health and Heath Authorities must build, support and have access to regional associations that can quickly describe what is working well in long term care and what is not working well. It is time to include the voice of residents and their families in long term care planning and services through independent family councils. Our residents need and deserve your support.

Sincerely yours,

(name and address)

* **Sample Letter #2**

**(Dear Minister Dix:)**

(*Suggestions for your* ***own*** *letter*: If a facility employee runs the “family council” meetings in your facility, describe it, and if it does not work well, explain why). Consider saying that you feel safer talking about concerns in a forum of just family members, without facility staff or management in attendance for fear of retaliation against your loved one in care. Conclude by saying that it’s important that the MOH implement the “Proposal for Change” submitted by the Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils, and the Seniors’ Advocate’s recommendation.)

(Name and address)

* **Sample Letter #3**

**(Dear Minister Dix:)**

(*Suggestions for your* ***own*** *letter*: If your individual voice or your independent family council has or had been marginalized or ignored, describe what has happened. And point out any cost to your loved one in care. And ask for implementation of the Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils “Proposal for Change” and the Seniors Advocate’s recommendation for a “Provincial Association of Family Councils”.)

(Name and address)

* **Sample Letter #4**

**Dear Minister Dix:**

Currently, I do not have a loved one in long term care***.*** However, if I or someone I care about ends up in long term care, I would certainly want to know that there is a guarantee for the collective voice of a family council and a regional association. To do anything less is a betrayal to perhaps one of the most vulnerable groups in BC. Residents’ loved ones must at least have a collective voice in decisions being made that affect the Residents’ quality of life.

I also suspect that many residents have no one to advocate for them. A family council that is supported by the Ministry of Health would serve to help these especially vulnerable residents. The Ministry of Health must not expect them to fend for themselves. They need the kind of community support and oversight provided by independent family councils.

The Vancouver Island Association of family Councils “Proposal for Change” and the Senior’s Advocate’s recommendation to build a “Provincial Association of Family Councils” must be supported by the Ministry of Health.

(Name and address)

You would all be aware of the "Proposal for Change" that the Vancouver
Island Association of Family Councils first took to Health Minister Dix in
March of 2019.  You would also be aware of the November 2020 recommendation
that Seniors Advocate, Isobel Mackenzie, made.  She recommended the
establishment of a provincial association of Family Councils.  She stated
that: "The voice of residents and their family members must be embedded in
decisions on how we shape our long-term care and assisted living system in
British Columbia going forward."  Her recommendation spoke to the needs
expressed in our "Proposal for Change".   The time is absolutely perfect for
us to help make these things happen.   But WE must make it happen.

Please see (attached) the most recent letter that we sent to Minister Dix.
It reveals how the very important community/family voice is easily
marginalized when it comes to decisions being made in long term care -
ultimately at the expense of vulnerable residents.   Please also see
(attached) our "Proposal for Change".  Our recommendations are consistent
with best practices in other provinces, are cost-free for long term care
operators, and give residents the best chance to receive quality of care and
to experience quality of life.  And if enacted by the Ministry of Health
they give communities the best chance to be a guaranteed voice in how long
term care services are shaped well into the future.

(know that Minister Dix already has the Oct 30 letter from our association
and the Proposal for Change)

I've tried to make our letter writing as easy as possible for each of you:

\*       I have attached a word document that has contact information for
intended recipients of our letters.  Please include all of these people in
your mailout.
\*       The word document also has examples/suggestions of letters that
might be sent.
\*       The document provides two complete sample letters.
\*       The document also provides some suggestions for writing your own
letter.  Feel free to use parts of the sample letters if they are similar to
your experience but please include your own thoughts or experiences where
appropriate.  Samples that I have provided have been based on the
experiences of family members in our association.

We hope to have letters into Minister Dix by December 16, 2020

Chairpersons: as soon as possible, please encourage all members of your
council to write letters. \*\*\* Please begin by forwarding this email to all
of them \*\*\*.  I do NOT have all of your members email addresses, so I'm
relying on chairpersons to distribute, to encourage and to remind.   Thanks.

Many thanks for any help you can give to our residents in care through this
campaign.  We CAN start to bring about stability in long term care and we
CAN start to bring quality of life to residents.   It WILL happen if
Minister Dix hears from many of us.  It is less likely to happen if he hears
from only a few of us.  It is as simple as that.  Let's make it happen !

Please contact me if you have any questions, or if I've missed anything that
you need.