



June 1, 2022

Cariboo Chilcotin Regional Hospital District Board
Suite D, 180 North Third Ave
Williams Lake, BC
V2G 2A4

Dear Chair and Directors:

Re: Additional Healthcare Recruitment & Retention Funding Request

The City of Quesnel would like to request additional funding to support our award-winning Healthcare Recruitment program. In order to better retain our physicians, we need to support the recruitment of locums to provide much needed time off for GPs. Currently, specialty physicians and surgeons receive subsidized accommodations and travel through Rural Locums of BC. This subsidy was provided to GP locums for the past two years, but is no longer available. We have only seen one locum GP visit Quesnel since the end of this program.

There are 21 practicing GPs in Quesnel eligible for 6-8 weeks of annual vacation time each year.

The City of Quesnel is requesting up to \$73,908 to support the recruitment of locums to Quesnel. This will cover:

- \$500 travel stipend paid to any locum providing a minimum of 2 weeks of coverage in Quesnel;
- \$60/day accommodation stipend OR \$30/day stipend if staying with friends/family OR free accommodation in the City of Quesnel Healthcare Apartment, if available;
- Covering any loss incurred on the City's existing Healthcare Apartment.

The stipend will cover up to 4 weeks of vacation time for each practicing GP in Quesnel.



Budget:

	Stipend	Doctors	Weeks	
Travel stipend	500	21	2	\$ 21,000.00
Accommodation allowance	420	21	4	\$ 35,280.00
Maximum loss				\$ 12,000.00
Admin				\$ 5,628.00
Total				\$ 73,908.00

According to our existing program, the Healthcare Recruitment Coordinator will continue to assist locums in finding appropriate accommodations and provide a small welcome package. The HRC currently has a small pool of 6-8 furnished apartments suitable for a professional, which are available for short term stays in the community.

As costs will vary based on the number of locums attracted to Quesnel, and the number of weeks of coverage provided by each locum, the City is proposing that a maximum budget amount be approved, but that billing be based on the actual costs incurred each quarter, up to that total maximum annual amount.

Leasing a second furnished apartment would have more predictable costs, but physicians, locums and healthcare professionals do not arrive on a predictable schedule. Arrivals and departures do not always occur on the first and last of the month. One month may see 6 new arrivals, and the next two months may see none. An ongoing furnished apartment only solves the housing issue for one professional at a time. Providing a stipend and supporting the search for appropriate housing provides more flexibility, and supports more professionals arriving in the community. Covering a stipend as opposed to actual costs simplifies administration on all sides.

While this request directly supports the recruitment of locums, the ultimate aim is better retention of our existing physicians. Without locum support, the physicians are not able to take vacation time. Regular workload is high, with pandemic pressures adding to burnout. This support will improve the work-life balance of our GPs. In addition, we are hearing more new doctors are practicing first as locums in order to "try out" different communities. This program will allow us to showcase the supportive community environment they can expect if they make Quesnel their permanent home.

The City of Quesnel is requesting that the current funding agreement be modified to include a prorated amount for the remainder of 2022, and full amount for 2023, which brings us to the end of the current funding contract. At the end of 2023, the program may be reviewed, renewed or extended if mutually agreeable or adjusted as needed, based on successes and challenges.



Thank you for your consideration of this request,

Byron Johnson
City Manager
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