



July 17, 2026

The Honourable David Eby, KC
Premier of British Columbia
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Josie Osborne
Minister of Health
Province of British Columbia

Via email : Premier@gov.bc.ca ; HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Eby and Minister Osborne,

RE: Urgent Provincial Action Required on Secure Care and Mandatory Treatment Capacity in the Southern Interior

We, the undersigned Chief of Osoyoos Indian Band and the Okanagan Mayors of Kelowna, Oliver, Penticton, Vernon and West Kelowna, are writing again to urge the Province to prioritize the Okanagan Correctional Centre (OCC) as the next site for dignified, health-led secure care and mandatory treatment capacity in the Southern Interior.

Nearly a year has passed since our September 10, 2025 letter urging for your government to consider and advance the OCC as a practical and immediate opportunity to expand secure care and mandatory treatment capacity in the region. Since then, the need has only intensified and no alternative solutions have been brought forward. Our communities continue to see people in crisis on our streets, rising public disorder and crime, and declining confidence in health, justice and community safety systems.

We recognize and support the Province's commitment to expand secure care and involuntary treatment options for people experiencing severe mental illness, brain injury, addiction and concurrent disorders – as announced at the last UBCM Convention. What is now needed is implementation, including a clear path forward for the Interior and a facility scaled to meet the magnitude of need. A 10- to 20-unit facility will not be sufficient. We agree with your previous comments that this program needs to happen quickly and at scale. In our view this translates to a ~80-100+ bed facility.

Local governments across the Southern Interior are aligned in calling for expanded voluntary and involuntary treatment capacity, complex care and specifically serious consideration of underutilized provincial assets that could be adapted for therapeutic, health-led treatment. This reflects the continued advocacy of us as regional mayors, SIGLA and the BC Urban Mayors' Caucus.

Residents expect compassion for people who are suffering, but they also expect action when individuals are unable or unwilling to access care voluntarily and untreated illness places them or others at risk. Compassion cannot mean leaving people to deteriorate in public spaces or cycle repeatedly through emergency rooms, shelters, police cells and the justice system without a pathway to stabilization, treatment and recovery.

The OCC presents a tangible opportunity to move from commitment to delivery. We are not suggesting that correctional facilities replace health care. We are urging the Province to assess and prioritize existing and modern secure public infrastructure that can be adapted to meet an urgent health and public safety

need. Repurposing a custody/correction centre is the same approach you are deploying at the Prince George site.

Political Provincial direction must also be matched by system accountability. Local governments should not continue to hear that secure care and complex care capacity are priorities while seeing limited progress on sites, service models or timelines – as has been our experience in the Interior.

We respectfully request a timely update and path forward on the OCC opportunity, including whether the site will be advanced for secure care, what further analysis is required, and what timelines will guide implementation.

We also request improved collaborative engagement with Okanagan local governments, Interior Health, public safety partners and community agencies to ensure a location and model of care selected reflects regional realities and delivers measurable outcomes to improve community conditions. This is a matter of urgency and small steps toward a long-term solution are not enough.

Our communities have been patient, constructive and consistent. The support exists. The need is immediate. We urge the Province to act.

Sincerely,



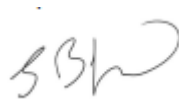
Chief Clarence Louie
Osoyoos Indian Band



Mayor Tom Dyas
City of Kelowna



Mayor Martin Johansen
Town of Oliver



Mayor Julius Bloomfield
City of Penticton



Mayor Victor Cumming
City of Vernon



Mayor Gord Milsom
City of West Kelowna

cc:

Hon. Nina Krieger, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Hon. Terry Yung, Minister of State for Community Safety and Integrated Services
Hon. Lisa Beare, (Interim) Minister of Infrastructure
Hon. Brittny Anderson, Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities
Amelia Boulton, MLA, Penticton Summerland
Dr. Daniel Vigo, B.C.'s Chief Scientific Advisor for psychiatry, toxic drugs and concurrent disorders
Bill Sarai, President, Southern Interior Local Government Association (SIGLA)
Dr. Robert Halpenny, Chair, Interior Health Board of Directors
Sylvia Weir, CEO, Interior Health
Elizabeth Cull, Chair, Provincial Health Services Agency Board of Directors
Paul Mochrie, President & CEO, Provincial Health Services Agency