



Council Report  
For the Meeting of April 16, 2020

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To: April 16, 2020 Committee of the Whole      Date: April 14, 2020  
From: Councillor Alto & Mayor Helps  
Subject: Endorsing a letter to provincial Ministers re Urgent Action to Address Inequities in COVID-19 Regional Response

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## BACKGROUND

Representatives from community service agencies and health professionals have written an *OPEN LETTER: RE Need for URGENT ACTION to Address Inequities in COVID 19 Regional Response*, attached.

This letter has been submitted to the Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. It was copied to Premier John Horgan, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Honourable Judy Darcy, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Honourable Scott Fraser, and Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Honourable Shane Simpson.

The letter lays out the situation facing residents who are unsheltered or living in over-crowded spaces, noting that, four weeks into COVID 19 restrictions, these residents do not have the means or opportunities to observe the health protections or precautions directed to be undertaken by Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, and Island Health Chief Medical Health Officer Dr. Richard Stanwick.

The letter goes on to highlight the immediate provincial actions needed to provide an effective regional on the ground response to protect the most vulnerable in our community. The first of these reflects the same request being made by the City of Victoria, *that the Province Use emergency powers to immediately appropriate hotels and motels and fund costs including costs of staffing and Housing First supports*. Requests in the other five sections of the letter complement the City's own requests and actions taken in our local response to COVID-19.

The letter's original signatories include representatives from SOLID Outreach Society (Mark Willson, Director of Programs), AIDS Vancouver Island Health and Community Services (Katrina Jensen, Executive Director), Peers Victoria Resources Society (Rachel Phillips, Executive Director), and nursing health professionals Dr. Bernie Pauly (RN), Meaghan Brown (RN) and Corey Ranger (RN). The letter has been posted online for the optional addition of other supporters' signatures. In the 24 hours since being made available, these endorsements are growing in number and already include:

- Anne Nguyen, MD, Inner City and Addiction Doctor, Victoria Inner City COVID Response
- Dr. A. J. Brosseau, Victoria Cool Aid Society
- William Bullock, MD, CCFP
- Ash Heaslip, Inner City and Addiction Doctor, Victoria Inner City COVID Response
- Miranda Liebel
- Kelsey Roden, MD
- Madelaine Beckett

Further endorsements are expected and can be made by visiting  
<https://forms.gle/NhTFcuUC1JoTncSt8>.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council endorse the attached letter, and ask the Mayor to communicate this endorsement to Honourable Selina Robinson, Honourable Adrian Dix, Premier John Horgan, Honourable Mike Farnworth, Honourable Judy Darcy, Honourable Scott Fraser, and Honourable Shane Simpson.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Alto



Mayor Helps