



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Hon. Adrian Dix
Minister of Health
Room 337, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C., V8V 1X4

March 22, 2024

RE: Urgent Support Needed for Retinal Diseases Treatment Program

Dear Minister Dix,

I write this letter requesting that you take urgent action to resolve the issues related to the Retinal Diseases Treatment Program. As of March 31, 2024, 25,000 British Columbians will be impacted by the budget reductions that were approved by your Ministry. The impact of this decision will result in retinal specialists withdrawing from the program. In the event this reduction proceeds, the consequences for patients will be devastating.

This program is not just a medical service; it is a lifeline for those facing sight-threatening conditions, offering monthly injections that prevent blindness. My colleagues and I have raised this issue with you multiple times. Despite your assurance on March 14, 2024, that British Columbians would “continue to get the free service they deserve,” we have received no indication that they won’t have to start paying in just a few days.

The impact of these cuts extends far beyond statistics and budgets. It will further exacerbate our healthcare crisis by placing an unfair financial burden on individuals fighting to maintain their sight. With the fast-approaching deadline, many are left in a state of panic, desperately seeking ways to fund their own care to avoid losing their vision.

British Columbians need more than reassurances; they need to see a complete reversal of the 32 percent cut so they aren’t forced to pay for the medical care they require to maintain their vision.

British Columbians deserve access to healthcare that protects their quality of life. I urge you to prioritize this issue and reverse this harmful budget cut.

Sincerely,

Shirley Bond, MLA
Prince George-Valemount
BC United Shadow Minister for Health