

June 26, 2013

Franci Stratton  
Chair, North Vancouver Board of Education  
c/o North Vancouver School District No. 44  
2121 Lonsdale Avenue  
North Vancouver, BC  
V7M 2K6

Dear Ms. Stratton ,

Thank you for your letter regarding the recommendation of the North Vancouver Board of Education and its partner groups that shelled space in the new HOpe Centre be designed to address youth mental health issues in our community, particularly their needs for hospital-based intervention. Please accept our apologies for the delay in responding to your letter.

As you know, the North Shore has a range of community based services to address the mental health issues of youth, some funded through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), others through Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), and still others solely or in partnership with other community partners, such as the School Districts.

These services include: individual counseling; family counseling; parent groups; a hospital liaison for children and youth who come to the Lions Gate Hospital Emergency Department; psychiatric services; a therapeutic day program for children, therapeutic groups for youth, and prevention/early intervention programs in North and West Vancouver schools.

At this time, however, Coastal does not have youth specific hospital-based mental health care. We recognize that the current approach of providing hospital based mental health services to young people on adult psychiatry units or on pediatric inpatient units is inconsistent with the recommended best practice. We take pride in the range of community-based services the North Shore offers to support our children and youth. We also share your concern regarding the availability of age- and developmentally-appropriate hospital based mental health care for youth – both on the North Shore and throughout our health region.

We are pleased to advise that preliminary discussions have begun amongst the VCH mental health leadership team to identify how we might best develop hospital based mental health care for youth across our health region. As part of that discussion, we are exploring options for the HOpe Centre shelled space. The VCH mental health leadership is also looking at ways

to enhance the continuum of child and youth services, in partnership with MCFD, in order to better support families along their journey from timely assessment and treatment to support and recovery.

Members of the VCH mental health leadership team would be pleased to meet with the North Vancouver Board of Education and its partner groups to engage in dialogue around this important need and recent developments to enhance child and youth mental health services on the North Shore. The North Vancouver Board of Education and its partner groups are key stakeholders in enabling our understanding of the needs of vulnerable youth on the North Shore, and we value your input. Elizabeth Stanger, Coastal Director of Mental Health & Addictions, will be in touch to discuss a suitable time and format for a meeting.

Thank you for making us aware of your recommendation for the HOpe Centre shelled space.

Sincerely,



Wendy Hansson  
Chief Operating Officer  
Coastal Community of Care

cc:

Dr. David Ostrow, President & Chief Executive Officer, VCH  
Yasmin Jetha, Director, VCH - Regional Mental Health and Addiction Program  
Elizabeth Stanger, Director, VCH - Coastal Mental Health and Addiction Program