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The **Pulse**

of Richmond Hospital

A new Acute Care Tower is our community's top priority

Last week I wrote about the groundswell of community support in Richmond as individuals, business groups, community and seniors organizations made submissions to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services urging the Provincial Government to fund a new Acute Care Tower in Richmond in the 2018 budget so construction can begin by 2020.

I want to share another letter, this time from someone on the frontline of care day in and day out at Richmond Hospital.

Dr. David Li is the program head of the Richmond Hospital Hospitalist program. Along with his team of 18 hospitalist physicians, they are responsible for providing care for up to 130 acute care in-patients daily at Richmond Hospital. Dr. Li has been working at Richmond Hospital for the past 11 years and knows firsthand all too well the urgent need for a new Acute Care Tower at Richmond Hospital. Here is his passionate plea:

“Over the past 11 years, I have seen a tremendous growth in the population of Richmond and as a result of that, increased demand on our hospital inpatient service. This level of growth put a significant strain on an aging facility. Our hospital is operating at constant over-capacity and every year during the flu season, we can have up to 30 inpatients waiting for a hospital bed in the emergency department sometimes lasting up to five days.

“It's no wonder we could never meet the target of inpatient admissions transferred from the Emergency

Department as set out by the Ministry of Health. We simply do not have the inpatient beds to accommodate the surge and the ongoing service demand from our population growth. I know the staff here at Richmond Hospital are doing the best they can to maintain patient flow but after years of over-capacity, it is evident that all of the staff here are showing signs of burn-out.

“It is well known the original North Tower of the Richmond Hospital is considered structurally unsafe to withstand the next earthquake. Not only are there three units of inpatients located on the North tower but our physician and staff offices are also located on the North tower. We are only half-joking when we say that we are risking our lives by coming to work every day. On a daily basis, there are many surgeries that take place in the operating rooms located on the main floor of the original North Tower. I have been in the operating room at night time during an emergency surgery wondering if the entire building is going to collapse on us. This becomes especially poignant when we hear there are earthquake tremors in other parts of B.C. Are we not putting the lives of the Richmond Hospital patient and staff at risk by further delaying a project that should have been up and running years ago? Who is going to explain to the families of the people lost to a collapsed hospital tower that the losses of their lives are totally avoidable? This is truly a case of lives at stake!

“I ask you to please make a new Acute Care Tower in Richmond a top priority for the sake of the community of Richmond and the staff working at Richmond Hospital.”

Please write to the Premier, the Minister of Health as well as your local MLA to ensure a new Acute Care Tower is funded for Richmond.

