



April 20, 2020

Hon. Adrian Dix
British Columbia Minister of Health
Room 337 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Dix,

Subject: Pandemic Effects on Breastfeeding Families

British Columbia Lactation Consultants Association (BCLCA) is a registered society made up of International Board Certified Lactation Consultants* (IBCLCs) and others working to protect, support, and promote breastfeeding in our province.

We imagine that attention to vulnerable groups is being carefully balanced with the need to protect the health of all British Columbians in light of the current state of emergency. Understandably changes to healthcare programming and services have been implemented across the province in response to the coronavirus pandemic. However, access to high quality breastfeeding support across regions and within healthcare programming was inconsistent prior to the crisis. Thus, the current situation has only exacerbated the pre-existing lack of support through re-deploying public health resources and social distancing, making it even more difficult for breastfeeding families to achieve their infant feeding goals.

Yet when breastfeeding is going well, it provides a vital safety net to families by ensuring a safe, secure, reliable food source, providing immunological support to the infant and down regulating the stress response for both the breastfeeding parent and the nursing. In response to effects we are seeing as a result of the lack of support for breastfeeding families, BCLCA is advocating for changes to service in key areas in order to minimize the potential for long-term negative effects (for full discussion see: [BCLCA Position Paper](#)). In particular, we ask for ***the immediate provision of universal access to lactation consultant (IBCLC) services through 811 or by creating a dedicated provincial infant feeding support line, similar to what is available in [Ontario](#).***

We appreciate the tremendous amount of work that you are undertaking in these unprecedented times and that your government has demonstrated a commitment to the health and wellbeing of families. This is critical because the decisions made

today regarding care, resource allocation, and support will have lasting impacts on the health of the next generation.

Our organization looks forward to the opportunity to work with you at this difficult time and will be pleased to see the resources needed to support families allocated immediately in a way that is safe and accessible for families across our province. If we can do anything to help you, please let us know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tina', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tina Revai, RN, MN, IBCLC
President, BCLCA
On behalf of myself and the BCLCA Board

* International Board Certified Lactation Consultant – An IBCLC is a board certified professional member of the healthcare team who has earned and maintains evidence informed knowledge and expertise in breastfeeding management and care.