

# Saturna Island Property Owners' Association

September 3, 2014

To whom it may concern,

## **Re: Reduction in Nursing and Home Care Services on Saturna Island**

The Saturna Island Property Owners Association (SIPOA) has more than 230 members and represents a majority of property owners on Saturna Island. Our members have expressed their concerns around losing nursing and home care services on Saturna.

With a median age of 63 years, we have a population that is older than in most other communities. And the median age will only increase. Over the past decade we have seen our population and economy shrink due to primarily high ferry fares, which has led to very few young families being able to find work, hence, the proportion of retirees is increasing. Losing our nursing and home care services in a community with pre-dominantly seniors is going further put pressure, financial and social, on our community as many of our members simply cannot stay on island due to the lack of basic medical services – to which all tax payers are entitled.

Closest medical services will now be in Sidney, a minimum of a 2-hour trip, provided the person has access to a vehicle. Many patients using the home care nurse are using the services just because they don't have access to a vehicle or are physically unable to move.

Without nursing and home care services on Saturna, patients having undergone surgeries, even minor ones, will not be able to return home, but have to find accommodation in town until well enough to care for themselves. This adds financial pressure to families that may be too much for many and they will be forced to move off island. As our population declines further, more services will be cut, resulting in more people leaving and so on. The cut in nursing and home care services will result in a downward spiral for our island.

We ask that the Island Health consider innovative solutions to providing nursing and home care services that reflect our remote community and its high median age.

Sincerely,



Eva Hage  
President, SIPOA