

October 31, 2018

Janet Shute, Manager, Partnerships & Engagement  
Island Health  
#201-6551 Aulds Rd  
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6K2

**Re: Rx for Health Program Funding Request**

Dear Ms. Shute:

In 2016 the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Recreation and Parks Department was fortunate to receive a Community Wellness Grant provided by Island Health. The intent of the grant was, as you are likely aware, to provide funding to develop population level interventions that address the five modifiable health risk factors. With that goal in mind the recreation and parks department created a project called the 'Rx for Health'. The program aims to support and strengthen the relationship between the health care system and the wellness and recreation programs we provide and work collectively in raising awareness of the connection between physical activity and personal health.

Initially the program centered on developing relationships between the recreation and parks department and area doctors. Doctors' offices were provided with formatted prescription slips allowing for funded referrals (\$40 discount) to recreation programs and facility memberships. In 2017 we were fortunate to receive additional grant funding in the amount of \$74,160 from BC Health Communities. This funding allowed for the Rx for Health program to expand and now includes distribution of the prescriptions by community counselors, community nurses, nurse practitioners, and other health professionals. Since the launch of the program in April 2017 there have been 342 prescriptions redeemed.

A survey of referred patient participants conducted this summer confirmed that the goal of the project was being achieved; people were experiencing first-hand the benefits of physical activity on their personal health. Respondents spoke highly of the program and the interest in having it continue.

The program success has not come without challenges. Building awareness of the Rx for Health program within the medical community and having clients move from recommendation to action, has taken time. However, we have witnessed the positive impact it is having with residents. The Regional District of Nanaimo continues to see value in the program and is exploring options to sustain it. It is our intent to continue this project, hopefully in collaboration with the Island Health and other community health members in Oceanside.

We have other examples of successful programs that are a result of grant funding that we would be more than happy to share. We hope that grant opportunities that address downstream preventable measures continue.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Veenhof', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

William Veenhof, Chair

cc: Dr. Drew Digney, Medical Director Oceanside Health Centre  
Celeste Zimmer, Community Engagement Coordinator, BC Healthy Communities  
Evelyn Clark, Executive Director, Oceanside Division of Family Practice  
RDN D69 Recreation Commission