



September 18, 2021

Hon. Jason Kenney, Premier
Office of the Premier
307 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
premier@gov.ab.ca

RE: Federal assistance for overwhelmed Alberta hospitals

Dear Premier Kenney,

We are writing today as the presidents of Alberta’s largest health care unions and Alberta’s largest worker advocacy group to urge you in the strongest possible terms to call on the federal government to immediately deploy the military, the Red Cross and all available medical staffing resources from other provinces to assist our province’s overwhelmed hospitals.

Taken together, the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA), the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE), the Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA) and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), represent more than 100,000 people working in Alberta’s health care system.

It is our assessment that Alberta’s health care system is not just “on the verge” of collapse – we believe it’s actually collapsing in front of our eyes.

There are no more nurses in our province who can be deployed. There are no more paramedics. There are no more respiratory therapists. There are no more support staff. The tank is empty. The well is dry. Our members have been going above and beyond for 19 months, but they are worried that this wave of the pandemic is the one that will crush them.

With that in mind, we urge you to fulfill your constitutional role as Premier to reach out formally to the federal government for assistance. They cannot act unless you ask them to act. So please, on behalf of our beleaguered members on the front-line of this crisis, and on behalf of all Albertans, we are officially asking you to request help from the federal government.

As you know, there is a recent precedent for this kind of action. Just five months ago, in April 2021, three military medical units were deployed to support hospitals in Ontario as they were overwhelmed by the third wave of the pandemic. The federal government also

paid for the Red Cross to be deployed and helped coordinate assistance from other provinces. We need you to ask them to do the same for our province.

The hour is late and the situation is grim. By itself, federal deployment of resources will not be enough, to see us through. But it will help. The bottom line is that we need more aggressive action from your government to reduce the viral transmission that is driving this crisis. But, in the meantime, we need more people on the frontlines. Before we can get the help, we so desperately need from the rest of the country, we need you to ask for it. So, please, ask.

Sincerely,

Heather Smith, President, United Nurses of Alberta (UNA)
Guy Smith, President, Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE)
Mike Parker, President, Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA)
Rory Gill, President, CUPE Alberta
Gil McGowan, President, Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL)

Cc: Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister
justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Hon. Rachel Notley
Leader of the Official Opposition
edmonton.strathcona@assembly.ab.ca