



November 21, 2025

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Re: nuučaanul Tribal Council, čišaaʔath and huupačasʔath's Open Statement to Island Health and Minister of Health regarding closure of beds at WCGH ICU**

nuučaanul Tribal Council (NTC), President cloy-e-iis (Judith Sayers) and Vice President huqsim (Les Doiron), čišaaʔath, Elected Chief Councillor, waamiiš (Ken Watts), and huupačasʔath, Elected Chief Councillor, ʔa ma qak taʔa (Brandy Lauder), whose territories West Coast General Hospital (WCGH) sits on; are extremely concerned, sad, frustrated and disappointed to hear of the [recent changes](#) and resulting closure of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds at WCGH by Island Health. Despite our own Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Mid-Island Pacific Rim being the British Columbia (BC) Minister of Health, and continued progress towards improving relationships and experiences at WCGH in collaboration Island Health; this recent news at WCGH is disappointing.

**“huupačasʔath is not only concerned for our members, and all Indigenous people with this serious closure of ICU beds at West Coast General Hospital, we are concerned for patients who require care at this hospital in our territory, and we will look forward to immediate action”**, said huupačasʔath Elected Chief Councillor ʔa ma qak taʔa (Brandy Lauder).

[Yesterday's statement from Island Health](#) lacks humility and accountability. Comments such as *“This temporary change is not expected to impact the quality of patient care at WCGH”*, are unacceptable; when we know people's health will be seriously impacted by these bed closures; not if, but when. Taking ownership and responsibility are key values and principles our people take very seriously. To simply highlight capital investments and brag about things like new technology, room enhancements and site optimization projects, at a time when what is needed is for Island Health and the Ministry of Health to take responsibility.

**“As the portfolio holder for Health with the nuučaanul Tribal Council, I am very disappointed with how this recent closure of the ICU beds at WCGH has rolled out”**, said nuučaanul Tribal Council Vice President, huqsim (Les Doiron).

WCGH is funded by Island Health, which in turn is funded by the Province of British Columbia, and we would like to assume that everyone is doing the best they can with what they have. At the end of the day though if there are not have enough resources to ensure proper staffing, equipment and other requirements to keep an ICU open at a hospital; then emergency actions must be taken by the Ministry of Health and the Province of British Columbia. Additional stress and pressure

on WCGH, and other facilities such as Nanaimo General Hospital will only result in making things worse.

The NTC and both our First Nations look forward to meeting with WCGH, Island Health, the Minister and Ministry of Health immediately, to ensure there is a path forward to get the ICU back to fully operational.

**“As nuučaanuł we must try to remain optimistic, that our MLA and Minister of Health, Josie Osborne will do everything in her power to fix this serious situation that may impact the health and well-being of people on the West Coast. “**, said nuučaanuł Tribal Council President, cloy-e-iis (Judith Sayers).

For all nuučaanuł people we begin to ask ourselves about the state of healthcare within British Columbia, while we know there may never be enough resources to do everything that needs to be done, closures of beds at an ICU at any hospital should never occur and everything in organizations power must be done so this does not occur. We are not only advocating for our nuučaanuł people, but all those who expect *“Excellent health and care for everyone, everywhere, every time”*, at WCGH as per Island Health’s Vision. We call upon Island Health and the Minister of Health to not only take immediate action and prioritize necessary steps including financial investment to not only ensure that staffing of the ICU occurs; but whatever equipment, supports and other necessary work is required for it re-open as imminently as possible.

**“čišaaʔath wants to acknowledge the current patients who we hope are not impacted by the closure of the ICU beds at WCGH. We also want to remind everyone that local nurses, doctors and staff are not to blame for this closure. Let these moments of frustration help us unite as human-beings, and advocate and lobby for everyone who deserves proper care”**, said čišaaʔath Elected Chief Councillor, waamiiš (Ken Watts).

On behalf of all nuučaanuł,

cloy-e-iis (Judith Sayers), **nuučaanuł Tribal Council President**  
huqsim (Les Doiron), **nuučaanuł Tribal Council Vice President**  
ʔa ma qak taʔa (Brandy Lauder), **huupačasʔath Elected Chief Councillor**  
waamiiš (Ken Watts), **čišaaʔath Elected Chief Councillor**