

<<Your first names and last names>>

<<Your mailing address>>

The Honourable Dr. Terry Lake, M.L.A.  
Minister of Health  
Province of British Columbia  
337 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

<<Today's date>>

Dear Minister Lake,

We are writing as citizens and taxpayers of British Columbia (B.C.), and contributors to the provincial Medical Services Plan, regarding support for public funding of in vitro fertilization (IVF). We are joined by 73 percent of British Columbians who also believe in vitro fertilization treatments should be publicly funded.<sup>1</sup>

Infertility is a serious medical condition that affects both male and female partners. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes infertility as a disease that has proven treatments; IVF is a safe and effective treatment for infertility, particularly when tied to a single embryo transfer policy. This ensures that one healthy baby is delivered per pregnancy cycle, with the best results for mother and baby.

We respectfully request that as the Minister of Health for the Province of B.C., you initiate a bill that will introduce public funding to cover the costs of IVF as an important means of encouraging healthy family building practices in our province. B.C.'s health system could save \$78 million over 5 years by publicly funding IVF.

Premier Clark recognizes families as British Columbia's foundation, and we agree with her that strong families help build strong communities, a thriving economy, and a more secure

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on surveys conducted by the Infertility Awareness Association of Canada

PHONE

EMAIL

WEB

<<your phone number>>

<<your email address>>

[www.ivf4bc.ca](http://www.ivf4bc.ca)



future for the next generations. Publicly funding IVF treatment would give all British Columbians, regardless of income or geography, the opportunity to build their families safely.

The average cost for one cycle of IVF treatment is between \$5,800-\$8,000, not including the several thousand dollars required for medication. The cost of these treatments leads many families to choose to transfer multiple-embryos in the hope of increasing their chance of becoming pregnant. As a result, B.C. has a multiple birth rate of about 31%, compared to rates between 5-10% in jurisdictions that tie public funding to the practice of single embryo transfer. This high rate of multiples puts significant strain on B.C.'s healthcare system, because extensive care is required for these pregnancies and deliveries, and for babies born with complications or prematurely. Multiples also create significant health risks to mother and babies during pregnancy and birth, and often for the rest of the children's lives.

To date, governments in B.C. have not shown the leadership required on this very important family issue. We are respectfully requesting that you and your Department bring forward a policy on treatment for infertility, while taking the following facts into consideration:

- One in six Canadian couples will experience fertility problems or have difficulty achieving pregnancy. While eighty-five to ninety percent of these cases will be treated with non- assisted reproductive technology (ART) medication or surgery, about 5 to ten percent of couples require ART treatments such as IVF, in which barriers to successful conception are overcome in the laboratory. Currently, only a fraction of this number are able to access fertility treatments in B.C. due to the prohibitive costs of treatment, the burden of which is passed on to individual patients.
- In 1993, the Canadian Royal Commission on New Reproductive and Genetic Technologies recommended full public funding for fertility treatments that have proven benefit, such as IVF. In the two decades since the findings of the Commission, the safety and success rates of IVF have continued to increase, including improvements in intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), comprehensive

PHONE

EMAIL

WEB

<<your phone number>>

<<your email address>>

[www.ivf4bc.ca](http://www.ivf4bc.ca)

chromosomal screening (CCS), blastocyst culture, and embryo cryopreservation. The reality is we are moving towards 80 percent success rates because of these advances.

- More than 5 million babies have been born worldwide since the first IVF baby was born in 1978. Twenty-eight out of thirty-four OECD member countries (more than 82 percent) publicly fund IVF, including Australia, New Zealand, Japan and most of the EU.<sup>2</sup> Belgium, France, Israel, Slovenia and Sweden offer multiple, fully funded IVF cycles. 15 states in the United States along with Quebec and Ontario in Canada, also offer some form of public funding. Each jurisdiction has strict regulations regarding how funding is administered, including who qualifies for funding, the number of cycles covered etc.
- The detrimental effect of infertility on mental health can cause long-term harm to relationships and left untreated, can lead to depression. This, in turn, leads to a strain on the health system as well as on the economy when it interferes with people's ability to work or when it breaks apart families. Putting the financial burden on patients magnifies these effects at a time when people need society's support.
- Public funding of IVF that is linked to the practice of single embryo transfer could save B.C.'s health system \$78 million over 5 years and give all British Columbians, regardless of income or geography, the opportunity to build their families safely. A single embryo transfer policy would help to reduce B.C.'s multiple birth rate from 31% to between 5-10%, and thereby reduce the need for expensive care or associated health risks to mother and babies.

Minister Lake, infertility can affect anybody, at any age. People may be undergoing lifesaving chemotherapy to preserve their fertility; young women may be suffering the results of lifelong

---

<sup>2</sup> 'Assisted reproduction technologies in Europe: an overview by Corinna Sorenson and Philipa Mladovsky', London School of Economics and Political Science, May 2006

PHONE

EMAIL

WEB

<<your phone number>>

<<your email address>>

[www.ivf4bc.ca](http://www.ivf4bc.ca)



endometriosis, tubal obstruction or polycystic ovarian syndrome;<sup>3</sup> two people may be faced with the diagnoses that they have genetic material that is in conflict. No matter the reason, the result remains the same: one in six B.C. residents will experience infertility, and the 5 to ten percent that require ART treatments would benefit greatly from government support to help build their families.

In recognition of the ninth annual Canadian Infertility Awareness Week this May 19-28, we request that as Minister of Health for the province, you and Premier Clark will bring forward a bill for public funding of IVF that will support healthy families in our province.

Sincerely,

<<Your first and last names and signature in space above>>

---

<sup>3</sup> Endometriosis affects 10 percent of women and often takes more than 9 years to diagnose. 30-40 percent of these cases lead to infertility.

PHONE

EMAIL

WEB

<<your phone number>>

<<your email address>>

[www.ivf4bc.ca](http://www.ivf4bc.ca)