

Dear Employer,

Please treat this letter as a sick note.

British Columbia remains in the midst of a primary care crisis, with around one million residents unable to access a family physician due to the shortage.

Sick notes place an unnecessary burden on the health care system at a time when family physicians are experiencing ever-increasing workloads and levels of burn-out.

The provision of a sick note, similar to completion of an insurance form, is not considered a medically necessary service. Patients who have a family doctor can therefore be charged for this service and those who do not have a family doctor are also faced with long waits at walk-in clinics or Urgent Primary Care Centres (UPCC).

As of January 1, 2022, eligible full and part-time employees in BC can take up to five paid sick days (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/paid-sick-leave>). Sick notes are not required for individuals to be eligible for paid sick leave or to return to their places of work or school.

On January 18, 2022, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) stated that if individuals become ill and take sick days, they do not require a note from their family physician to get back to work.

We greatly appreciate your support for family physicians by allowing them to focus on those in need of medical care.

With thanks,

Dr. Katherine Bell, MD CCFP
President
BC College of Family Physicians

Dr. Maryam Zeineddin, MD, CCFP, FCFP
President
BC Family Doctors

Please note, this is not a legal document.