

January 4, 2019

Dear Mayor Campsall and the South Cariboo Joint Committee,

I am writing in favour of the South Cariboo Aquaplex Initiative's proposal. As a family physician, I care for patients from birth to end-of-life. Patients in every stage of life and with various degrees of health and illness would benefit from the opportunities that a pool would provide. It would also provide a communal area where people can enjoy an activity together despite socioeconomic, cultural, and personal differences.

I am engaged as the physician presenter for the PARTY program, which encourages students at Peter Skene Ogden Secondary School to make safe decisions to prevent accidental death. Drownings would decrease if there was a facility to teach swimming lessons. A pool would also provide excellent recreational opportunities for youth, including competitive swimming and employment opportunities as life-guards and swimming instructors.

Mental health issues are often higher in the winter because of the shorter days, colder weather, and inaccessibility of outdoor activity. A pool would improve exercise and community engagement opportunities for people prone to mental health disorders. Numerous studies have shown that patients with chronic pain benefit from aquatic exercise because it is low impact and high resistance. Furthermore, prenatal patients experience dramatic benefit from swimming because of the reduced effects of gravity on their bodies which provides relief to back and joint pain.

Elderly patients often suffer from advanced joint degeneration, joint replacements, musculoskeletal disorders, and other pain problems. Falls in the frail and elderly would decrease if there was a safe, low impact opportunity for exercise, particularly in the winter. I know that a use of a pool would improve joint and cardiovascular health in these patients.

As a Director of the Central Interior Rural Division of Family Practice and as the 100 Mile House District General Hospital Medical Staff Association President, I have been involved in physician recruitment and retention. It is apparent to me that a pool is a significant item of appeal for professionals who are considering moving to and staying in the area and I know that proceeding forward on this initiative would improve recruitment in the health fields. I can extrapolate that it would also assist in attracting other professionals in education, emergency services, and other fields.

Lastly, I am the father of two preschool-aged children and they are the greatest reason why a pool is so important to me. I want my children to be able to get swimming lessons, just as I did in my youth, so that they are safe when playing on the lakes in the summer. I want them to have opportunities for aerobic and core-strengthening exercise in the winter when the snow and cold make it difficult for them to play outside, particularly in the dark afternoons and evening. And I want them to obtain lifeguard and first aid skills as young adults so that they can be smart outdoors and able to help people.

This community is growing, and we need the resources to support the influx of young families as well as our aging population. Whether it is for health, fitness, community engagement, safety, or professional recruitment and retention, it is my opinion that a pool would be significantly beneficial to the residents of the South Cariboo.

Sincerely,

Dr. Andrew J. Juren
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President, 100 Mile District General Hospital Medical Staff Association
Director, Central Interior Rural Division of Family Practice