Town of Lake Cowichan
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Town of Lake Cowichan Advances Partnership to Establish Long-Term Medical Clinic

Lake Cowichan, BC – October 13, 2026 – The Town of Lake Cowichan is taking an important step toward restoring and strengthening local healthcare services through a proposed partnership with Dr. Neumann, MD to establish a sustainable medical clinic serving Lake Cowichan and the broader West Cowichan region.

Today, the Town and Dr. Neumann are scheduled to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), establishing a framework for negotiations toward a formal Medical Clinic Agreement. The agreement would define each party's commitments, financial accountability measures, operating expectations and other necessary conditions.

This announcement follows a challenging period for local healthcare in our community and region. In March 2025, Dr. David Froese retired after approximately 30 years of service. On June 30, 2025, Dr. Wagdy Basily, the community's last remaining family physician, departed, leading to the closure of Lakeside Medical Clinic.

Recognizing the impact on residents and families, the Town has continued advocating for improved access to primary care, including engagement with the Province through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

Dr. Neumann began serving Lake Cowichan as a physician in September 2025. Subsequent discussions with Town administration led to a comprehensive proposal presented to Mayor and Council in July 2026, envisioning a long-term clinic with the real opportunity to attract additional healthcare professionals. This is not an unprecedented approach. Similar models have been successfully implemented in other communities, including City of Grand Forks.

Under the proposed partnership, the Town is considering a financial contribution of up to $250,000 toward the establishment of a sustainable medical clinic in Lake Cowichan. The proposed investment would be tied to a commitment to delivering medical services in the community for a defined period, with clear accountability measures and

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operating expectations aimed at strengthening access to healthcare for local residents. The arrangement would be subject to successful negotiations, a formal agreement, and compliance with applicable legislative requirements.

"Mayor, Council, and Staff have been working diligently behind the scenes to attract medical practitioners since our last physician departed. It has been a long process, but today's announcement is the start of a new direction – attracting more medical professionals to this renovated clinic. To Dr. Neuman, thank you for your service, for wanting to invest long-term in Lake Cowichan in service to our residents. To Council, thank you for seeing the value of this initiative and supporting it, and to everyone who has worked on this file, thank you for your dedication and hard work on this important topic."

Tim McGonigle, Mayor

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