

August 20, 2021

**VICE-PRESIDENT
INTERNATIONAL & STUDENT AFFAIRS**

62 York Street
Sackville, NB Canada E4L 1E2
Tel: (506) 364-2254
Fax: (506) 364-2263
www.mta.ca

Dear Minister Shephard,

As the Vice President of International and Student Affairs at Mount Allison University and as a member of the Tantramar Rural Health Action Group, I write to you today to offer Mount Allison's support in creating solutions to the New Brunswick's current health-care challenges. Like other regions in the province, Sackville has recently been impacted by the shortage of available health-care providers, resulting in the weekend closure of the emergency room at the Sackville Memorial Hospital.

Each year, Mount Allison University attracts over 2,200 students to the Tantramar region, injecting more than \$120 million into the economy. Central to our ability to recruit and retain these students is access to high quality services and amenities. The closure of the emergency room Friday through Sunday has the potential to impede our ability to attract students, as this development makes Mount Allison the only university in Atlantic Canada that does not have 24-hour healthcare within a 20km radius of its campus. Additionally, we have heard from our Mount Allison Student Union that students are fearful of returning to campus due to concerns regarding accessing care.

Like Government, we believe a responsive, dependable and sustainable health-care system is foundational to the well-being of our communities. We applaud the recent proactive measures you and your colleagues have taken to create a network of excellence in this regard. Your announcements concerning the establishment of new nurse practitioner clinics represent the type of innovative thinking that will be required if we are to address the challenges wrought by the existing health-care professional shortage.

In order to identify short-term solutions to mitigate student concerns, the Tantramar Rural Health Action Group would like to respectfully request a meeting with yourself and your officials. We remain confident that timely and practical solutions can be found as longer-term challenges receive the thoughtful and deliberate consideration they warrant. We are eager to work collaboratively with you in the interest of Mount Allison students, Tantramar Residents, and all New Brunswickers.

Sincerely,



Anne Comfort

Vice President, International and Student Affairs
Mount Allison University

c. John Higham, Chair, Tantramar Rural Health Action Group
Hannah Ehler, VP External Affairs, Mount Allison Student Union