

MEMRAMCOOK-TANTRAMAR COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

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20 August 2021

Dear Minister Shephard

We are the co-Chairs of what used to be called the Tantramar Covid-19 Task Force, and is now re-named the Memramcook-Tantramar Community Task Force (M-TCTF). You can tell by our namesake that our first mandate was to make sure that everyone in the Tantramar region thrived during the uncertainty and stresses of the first year of the pandemic. In recent months, we are re-grouping with a longer term mandate: to maintain the community-based successes of our first year, and to address the needs that have emerged as a result of the pandemic.

The M-TCTF is made up of several “Action Groups”: Food Security, Mental Health, Physical Health, and Youth and Students. Our work is accountable to a large stakeholder group. Since April 2020, we have mobilized more than 200 volunteers, carrying out community service initiatives through our Action Groups and stakeholder members.

The Rural Health Action Group, that formed to address the significant healthcare gaps being created as emergency services are curtailed at the Sackville Memorial Hospital, now falls under our umbrella as well. This group is made up of a dozen local citizens from a variety of walks of life, all dedicated to developing, representing and proposing solutions for the significant healthcare risks that are increasing as our local services decrease. More of a think-tank than an Action Group, the members are quite keen to bring local expertise to bear on collaborative solutions.

We write to ask you to please communicate with this group when they ask to meet with you. They are intent upon finding solutions rather than blaming; working with what is possible rather than dreaming of impossibilities; and, learning from successful experiences from other places as they develop do-able options that make sense given our resources (infrastructure, local professionals, community goodwill) and needs.

John Higham is the chair of the Rural Health Action Group. The Mayors of Sackville (Shawn Mesheau), Memramcook (Maxime Bourgeois), Port Elgin (Jason Stokes) and Dorchester (Debbie Wiggins-Colwell), have also signed on, as well as the Chief Rebecca Knockwood of Fort Folly First Nation and Mount Allison University, of course. Our region is especially concerned, as more than 2,000 students arrive in the next 2 weeks, without 24/7 emergency services available, much less local physicians to meet their non-urgent needs.

You will certainly be hearing from the Action Group and/or its members. We commend their letters and calls to your immediate action.

Sincerely,

Margaret Tusz-King, B.Sc.(Pharm), M.Ed.
co-Chair

Patricia Estabrooks
co-Chair