

June 28, 2021- The Mayor met with Ambulance New Brunswick regarding coverage in Sackville to help mitigate the reduced emergency room hours. Further discussions with their District Operations Manager are anticipated.

One item of discussion was a pilot project currently happening in some areas of NB, including Minto, referred to as a rapid response paramedic. The paramedic provides immediate assistance to stabilize a patient while an ambulance is dispatched. This pilot project is something geared towards rural New Brunswick. Further discussions will take place around overall Sackville coverage.

June 22, 2021 – Meeting of the Hospital Ad Hoc Committee and Horizon Health Regional Board member Pauline Gallant.

The need for improved communications was made very clear as there was no communication with the community prior to announcing Emergency Department summer closure. Horizon Health has since taken steps to improve communications and recent meetings with the Town and stakeholders have been encouraging.

Recruitment was identified as the major challenge for the Sackville Memorial Hospital as the facility does not offer same level of experiences as larger hospitals.

Actions:

- The Hospital Ad Hoc Committee continues to work on mitigation strategies. Options to formalize the committee to ensure sustainability are being explored.
- There are opportunities for collaboration with Town/region and Horizon Health for recruitment and promotion.
- There are opportunities to create a regional approach with other municipal Mayors regarding health care.

June 21, 2021 – Our MLA Megan Mitton’s office organized a virtual meeting between community stakeholders (MLA’s office, local government representatives (Sackville, Port Elgin, Dorchester, Fort Folly), Mount Allison, Hospital Ad Hoc Committee members) and Horizon Health. The two main issues discussed were nursing shortages and recruitment strategies.

Horizon is finding it difficult to staff temporary positions at Sackville Memorial Hospital as there is a greater demand for permanent positions. They are also having challenges to attract graduates to rural hospitals in NB given the limited serviced at rural hospitals. Unfortunately, nursing demand in NB is higher than number of graduates.

Several important facts were provided by Horizon Health:

- There are currently seven (7) unfilled positions at Sackville Memorial Hospital. Five (5) of these positions are temporary which are much harder to fill.
- Horizon Health hired 104 nurses from NB based programs this year.

- Part of the UNB nursing program includes a rural nursing option, where students have been placed at the Sackville Memorial Hospital.

It was evident that there are opportunities for our community to be more involved in recruitment efforts and for a recruitment strategy to be more coordinated.

Actions:

- There is an opportunity for Sackville to improve the visibility of the Town to health care practitioners and help promote/share existing job opportunities in partnership with Horizon Health) to interns, travel nurses, retirees.
- Horizon Health is open to recruitment collaboration and ideas specific to our hospital and region.
- The topic of recruitment will be further explored with the Ad Hoc committee and Horizon Health.

Update from June 17, 2021

The Mayor and CAO met with Health Minister Dorothy Shephard on Thursday June 17. Several topics were discussed, including the need for better communication from the Province and Horizon Health, Municipal involvement in the recruitment process, health care reform vision submitted by the Hospital Ad hoc Steering Committee, and the larger implications of closures on the community (residents' safety, Mount Allison University, recruitment, economic development).

The main highlights from the meeting are as follows:

- Assurance from the Health Minister that the summer weekend Emergency Room closures are temporary.
- Enhanced communications between the Province, Horizon Health and municipalities are expected.
- The Province is committed to finding a collaborative strategy to address staffing shortages with the Municipality and Horizon Health.
- Further discussions and meetings are being scheduled with key stakeholders regarding health care reform.

The next step is a follow-up call to be arranged with Horizon Health (via the Department of Health) to develop a collaborative strategy going forward.

Update from June 10, 2021:

Horizon Health notified residents that the Emergency Department at Sackville Memorial Hospital is temporarily changing its weekend evening and nighttime hours of service for the summer months. These temporary service changes are due to ongoing nursing shortages at the hospital and this change is in effect until September 2021.

The Emergency Department will not see patients and clients during these closures, and ambulances will be diverted to other hospitals. All patients and clients requiring urgent medical care during this time will need to seek treatment at another hospital.

Hours of service for the summer will be:

Friday: Closed at 4 p.m.

Saturday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Monday: Open at 8 a.m.

Regular 24-hour service will be available throughout the week each Monday at 8 a.m. and ending each Fridays at 4 p.m.

Update from May 5, 2021

Below you will find the final briefing that our committee has submitted to the Minister of Health outlining our view of the future of health care and of the Sackville Memorial Hospital. I would like to thank my fellow committee members Sandy Burnett, Pat Estabrooks, Kathy Hamer, John Higham, Kathleen McMullen, Judy Morison and Ross Thomas for all their hard work and dedication in bringing this to fruition.

[Health Report Cover Letter](#)

[Health Care Reform Briefing](#)

Ron Aiken,

Former Deputy Mayor