

## NEWS RELEASE

**Date:** 17 January, 2022

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### **New Year Brings Hope for Restoration of Rural Health Care Services**

After a year in which access to quality health care in rural Southeast New Brunswick was threatened by reductions of emergency and acute care services at the Sackville Memorial Hospital, 2022 has begun on an encouraging note. That is the view of the co-chairs of the Rural Health Action Group.

“We feel encouraged,” said co-chair John Higham. “Year-end meetings with the Horizon Health Network have given us hope that the cutbacks against which we protested last year will indeed be temporary.

At a year-end meeting, Horizon officials assured representatives of the local Action Committee of their commitment to the long-term role of the regional hospital in Sackville, including restoration of 24/7 emergency care, return to a full number of acute care beds, and further investment in additional services.

A major challenge in recent months has been the loss of hospital staff, through retirement and transfers. Horizon has now agreed to collaborate with the local Action Group in marketing efforts to recruit and retain doctors, nurses, and support staff specifically for healthcare in the Memramcook-Tantramar region.

“In view of the much broader pressures of the pandemic on health care resources across Canada and around the world, only time will tell how effective Horizon’s efforts will be in restoring our local services,” stated co-chair Pat Estabrooks. “But regardless of that, our needs remain urgent and we will continue to push Horizon and the Department of Health to act as quickly as possible.”

The Rural Health Action Group is a part of and supported through the Memramcook-Tantramar Community Task Force, and is accountable in its efforts to members of the wider community, the 4 municipalities and the Fort Folly First Nation.