

Victoria County Memorial Hospital Working Group Update

Issue #1

Spring 2023



Welcome

Welcome to the first update of the Victoria County Memorial Hospital (VCMH) Working Group. This group was formed in October 2022 to work on the transition of the urgent treatment centre (UTC) at VCMH back to an emergency department. So far the group has held two meetings.

The working group is chaired by Andrew Heighton, Director Integrated Health - Rural Sites, Nova Scotia Health's Eastern Zone. Members also include a local physician, Nova Scotia Health staff, representatives from the provincial and municipal governments and community partners such as the Victoria County Community Health Board, VCMH Foundation, Alderwood Rest Home, and Wagmatcook and Waycobah First Nations. The group discusses opportunities around recruitment, retention, health care access and health services planning.

The group is currently looking for two or three more community members who are interested in joining the group. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about this opportunity, email andrew.heighton@nshealth.ca.



Kevin Livingstone, clinical nurse leader, prepares a suture tray at the Victoria County Urgent Treatment Centre.

UTC by the numbers (as of Apr. 23, 2023)

As of Apr. 23, 2023, 3,549 patients have been seen at the UTC. Of those:

- 1,042 were from Victoria County
- 2,018 were from Cape Breton Regional Municipality
- 262 were from Inverness County/Port Hawkesbury
- 15 were from Richmond County
- 72 were from other areas of Nova Scotia
- 40 were from other provinces
- 5 were from out of country

Majority of patients present with UTC appropriate conditions like: respiratory, muscular skeletal concerns (sprains, strains & fractures), earaches, urinary tract infections, sore throat, headaches and more.

EHS, Nova Scotia Health partner on care model for patients

In early April, Nova Scotia Health and Emergency Health Services (EHS) started a process where low acuity patients with no means of transportation could be seen at the urgent treatment centre (UTC).

"For example, if someone falls and has a fractured wrist and no transportation, they could call 911, be assessed by EHS and if the fracture is minor, EHS could call the UTC and get an appointment for the patient that day," says Andrew Heighton, working group chair and Director Integrated Health - Rural Sites, Nova Scotia Health.

While patient volumes are expected to be low, the unique model will help keep ambulances in the community and provide people with the most appropriate level of care without leaving the community. It's also the first model of its kind in Nova Scotia.



Staffing & physician recruitment

VCMH has:

- 1 family physician arriving later this year.
- 3 registered nursing (RNs) grads starting throughout the spring.
- 1 internationally trained nurse finishing clinical.
- been approved for Clinical Nurse Educator position for sites in Baddeck, Cheticamp and Neils Harbour.
- increased positions to make medical laboratory technologist (MLT) and medical laboratory assistant (MLA) full-time equivalent.
- added a 0.5 full-time equivalent clerical position to help with blood collections appointments.

Next steps for UTC:

- monitor and evaluate low acuity model with EHS
- work with physicians on possibly expanding UTC hours
- continue exploring opportunities to work with EHS to increase emergency services for the community
- provide additional/refresher ED education/training to staff