

OFFICE OF THE GREEN PARTY CAUCUS
Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, New Brunswick
E3B 5H1



BUREAU DU CAUCUS DU PARTI VERT
Assemblée législative du N.-B.
C.P. 6000
Fredericton, Nouveau-Brunswick
E3B 5H1

Via email

June 11, 2021

Dear Minister Shephard and Ms. McGrath,

I was surprised to be informed via social media and constituents that the Sackville Memorial Hospital Emergency Room will be closed during the summer months on Fridays at 4:00 pm and only be open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm on Saturdays and Sundays before reopening again Mondays at 8:00 am. The reason given is nursing shortages, which is a long-standing issue. Did consultation with the Hospital, the Hospital Foundation and the Town of Sackville and surrounding areas that depend on access to emergency services take place before this decision was made? If not, how was this decision made?

As outlined in the October 2020 Auditor General's report, ambulances in places like Port Elgin have among the longest response times in New Brunswick. Added to that, Port Elgin is over 70 km away from Moncton; not having an Emergency Room open at night may be a matter of life and death for the people living in the riding of Memramcook-Tantramar. There is also no clinic in the region open during those times for non-emergency issues.

Will other hospitals run by Horizon Health Authority, or in Vitalité for that matter, also be dealing with weekend closures throughout the summer? Is this effect of the province-wide nursing shortage only going to be felt at the Sackville Memorial Hospital?

Putting lives at risk in the Memramcook-Tantramar riding due to a province-wide nursing shortage is an unacceptable solution to a problem that touches all New Brunswick. While the nursing shortage pre-dates both your tenures in your current positions, it is frustrating that this problem has been allowed to become a crisis. I ask that you take immediate steps to consult with local stakeholders to create a new plan that will ensure that emergency health needs are met even as we navigate a difficult time. I have faith that the creativity and commitment of local health professionals and engaged community members are up to the challenge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Mitton".

Megan Mitton
MLA, Memramcook-Tantramar

CC David Coon, MLA, Fredericton South and Leader of Green Party of NB
Sackville Mayor Shawn Mesheau and Town Council
Fort Folly Chief Rebecca Knockwood
Dorchester Mayor Debbie Wiggins-Colwell
Port Elgin Mayor Elect Jason Stokes
Memramcook Mayor Maxime Bourgeois