



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2021068

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RE: Amherst, Cumberland County mayors express health-care concern

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – The mayors of the Town of Amherst and the Municipality of the County of Cumberland are expressing concern about a nursing shortage that is impacting the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre in Upper Nappan and All Saints Hospital in Springhill.

The mayors expressed their concern in a letter to Health Minister Michelle Thompson, dated Sept. 24, 2021. They also proposed a solution they believe would help resolve the problem in a timely manner.

“The chronic shortage of nurses has recently become acute,” Mayor David Kogon of Amherst and Cumberland County Mayor Murray Scott wrote. “The latest need to transfer emergency room nurses from All Saints to CRHCC attests to this.

“The acute shortage of nurses in our region is severely limiting the delivery of health care to our citizens and needs to be address quickly and definitively.”

Mayor Scott also expressed serious concern about the potential negative health-care impact the nursing shortage may have on Highcrest Nursing home in Springhill and the Springhill Institution, because of their reliance on the All Saints Emergency Room.

The mayors noted they had met the previous day with Cumberland North MLA Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin, Cumberland South MLA Tory Rushton and Deborah Kogon, the chairwoman of the Cumberland Healthcare Professionals Recruitment and Retention Committee. The committee helps recruit allied health-care professionals, with the exception of physicians, for the Cumberland region.

Also in attendance were representatives from the Cumberland Regional Health Care Foundation and All Saint Hospital Foundation.

“Our meeting was to see what more we, as a community, can do to retain nurses and also recruit more,” the mayors wrote.

Kogon and Murray pointed out recruitment of nurses currently rests solely with Nova Scotia Health, but is “unfortunately, a slow and often tedious process” in which the local community plays no part.

“As a result, we are very limited in what we can do,” they wrote. “We believe an effective innovative approach would be to treat nurse recruitment like physician recruitment. NSH would determine how many nursing positions are allotted to each hospital, but have each institution seek out, interview and hire their staff.”

The mayors indicated they would be more than willing to discuss their concern and solution with the health minister. They also thanked her for her time and consideration.

Besides the health minister, the letter was also sent to Smith-McCrossin, Rushton, Premier Tim Houston, NSH interim CEO Karen Oldfield, Oxford Mayor Gregory Henley, Linda Cloney, acting clerk, Town of Oxford, Cumberland County CAO Greg Herrett and Amherst CAO Jason MacDonald.