

A Committee of the Whole meeting was held in Council Chambers in Baddeck, on April 15, 2024, at 2:00pm with Deputy Warden Dauphinee in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1- Paul MacNeil

District #2- Perla MacLeod

District #3- Bruce Morrison, Warden

District #4 – Barbara Longva

District #5 – Fraser Patterson

District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden

District #7- Jackie Organ

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Alix Redden, CFO

Stephanie MacLeod, Recorder

Jennifer Dagsvik, Communications

ABSENT

District #8- Norman MacDonald

There were 3 people from the public, including 2 Village Commissioners.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee welcomed everyone and acknowledged that this meeting is being held in Unama'ki, one of seven traditional districts of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw People.

CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Warden Dauphinee called the meeting to order.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee acknowledged Councillor Eldon MacDonald from CBRM.

On Motion of Councillor Longva seconded by Councillor MacNeil that the Agenda for April 15, 2024, be approved.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Warden Morrison seconded by Councillor Longva that the Minutes for March 11, 2024, be approved.

Motion Carried.

NSHA (Nova Scotia Health Authority) UPDATE – BRETT MACDOUGALL and GLENN COX

Mr. MacDougall and Mr. Cox went over the following presentation:



Buchanan Memorial Community Health Centre

Overview:

- 10 beds, Level 4 ED
- 65+ staff members

Physicians

- 2/5 physician vacancies
- 1 RN prescriber in acute care/ED/Ambulatory Care
- Ongoing recruitment physician locums and physician recruitment.
- Opportunity for adding a physician assistant to the site

Nurse Practitioners (NPs)

- 1 full-time NP
- Additional NP approved for Buchanan (Student NP graduating and considering Buchanan)

Stats (Apr. 1, 2022-Mar. 31, 2023)

- Inpatient Admissions: 135 (low bed occupancy)
- Emergency Visits: 3,047
- Diagnostic Imaging exams: 2,379
 - X-rays: 1,371
 - ECGs: 1,008





Buchanan Memorial Community Health Centre

Successes

- Access to Primary Health Care; NP providing support for physician workload
- Mental Health Virtual Assessments for Urgent Care
- Advanced care paramedics assisting with staffing shortages. Working directly in ED but assisting in other areas.
- Health Excellence Canada (HEC) EXTRA fellowship project- enhancing access to care being implemented at BMCHC
- New X-ray equipment will be added in coming months
- Primary Health Care and NP will have pop-up urgent clinics

Next Steps

- Recruitment
- Enhancing access to care through HEC project and current Nurse Prescriber



Victoria County Memorial Hospital

Overview:

- 12 beds
- 90+ staff

Physicians

- 4.5 physician positions
- 1.0 and 0.5 vacancies (*Posting 2.0 FTE)
- Currently 5 family physicians in community, 2 share one fulltime position

Stats (Apr. 1, 2022 – Mar. 31, 2023)

- Inpatient Admissions: 259
- Emergency Department Visits: 5,128 (from Apr. 1- Oct.11, 2022)
- Urgent treatment centre (UTC): 3,129 (from Oct. 11, 2022 – Mar. 31, 2023)
- Diagnostic Imaging exams: 5,163
 - X-rays: 3,611
 - ECGs: 1,552





Victoria County Memorial Hospital

Staffing Overview:

Nursing

- ***NEW** Clinical Nurse Educator (CNE); supports Baddeck, NeilsHarbour & Cheticamp; based in Baddeck
- Clinical Nurse Lead (CNL) position filled
- 3 RN vacancies
- Added: 1 new grad and 1 internationally educated nurse (IEN)

Diagnostic Imaging, Lab & Rehab

- Full staffing complement



Victoria County Memorial Hospital

Successes

- Addition of CNE will allow education to be done onsite; less travel for staff
- Rural locum nursing program
- Mental Health virtual assessments for urgent care
- Strengthening of EHS and VCMH partnership

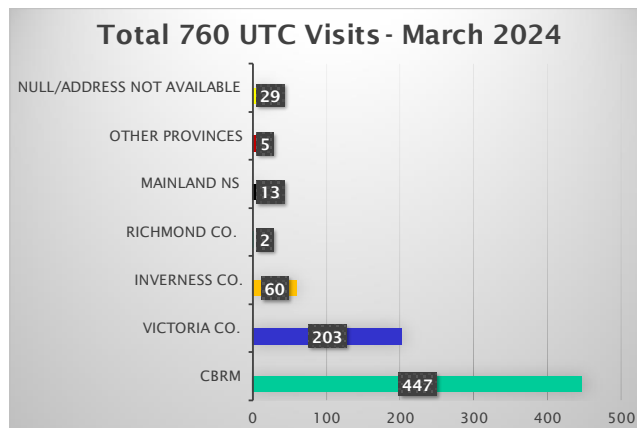
Next Steps

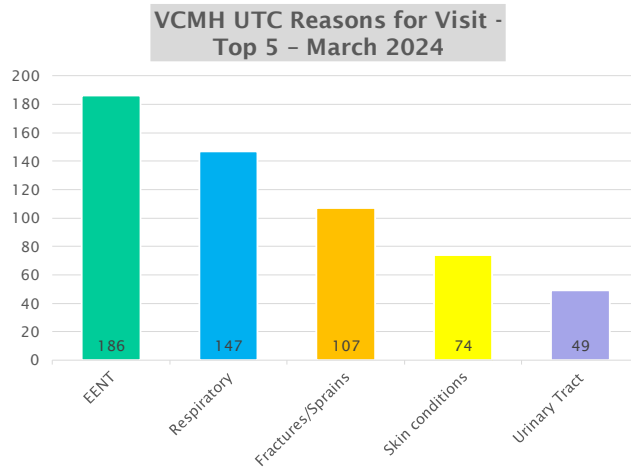
- Physician recruitment focusing on ED qualifications
- Staff recruitment ongoing
- Exploring enhanced access to emergent/urgent services
- Goal: **Access** to 24/7 emergency care
- Exploring space options to identify priority areas and explore space/program options outside VCMH



Victoria Consolidated Memorial Hospital UTC/ED Update

- UTC open Thursdays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; 7 days a week
- UTC has capacity for approximately 20 -30 visits per day
 - Average number of visits for March 2024 – 24 (low – 18, high – 31)
- EHS partnership programs added: low acuity and after -hours access.
- Goal: **Access** to 24/7 emergency care:
 - Temporary UTC and the EHS partnership programs will continue to operate.
 - Recruitment efforts will focus on physicians who can provide emergency department coverage at VCMH
 - Explore other care options including virtual care, mobile primary care clinics and more EHS after-hours partnerships.
 - Continue to work on stabilizing and enhancing access to care in CBRM
 - Ongoing discussions with the local physician group on opportunities to enhance access to care





Victoria Consolidated Memorial Hospital Low acuity pilot project

Partnered with EHS on low acuity pilot project

- Started in April 2023
- Patients must meet specific criteria i.e. mobility, CTAS level, access to transportation, etc.
- Patients meeting criteria would be transported to UTC

How it works (an example):

- If someone falls, has a fractured wrist and no transportation, they can call 911 and be assessed by EHS.
- If the fracture is minor, EHS can call UTC and get an appointment for the patient that day.

Benefits:

- Keeps ambulances in the community
- Provides people with the most appropriate level of care without leaving the community



Victoria Consolidated Memorial Hospital UTC Update – After hours access

- First of its kind
- Started December 2023
- UTC/EHS collaborative model of care
- Covers Baddeck EHS catchment area:
 - Starting after Glendale Road & Highway 105 headed to VCMH
 - Spanning to Lake Ainslie Chapel Rd at Highway 252 coming from Inverness
 - West Lake Ainslie and Lake Ainslie Chapel Road to Baddeck
 - Cabot Trail (North Shore) down
 - Up to Highway 105 New Harris Forks
 - Ross Ferry (added by EHS)



Victoria Consolidated Memorial Hospital UTC Update – After hours access (con't)

Process:

Patient EHS Baddeck catchment area calls 911 between 4 p.m. - 8 a.m.

EHS assess patient over the phone or inperson and care can be provided in one of the following ways:

1. EHS responds, treats and releases the patient.
2. EHS contacts VCMH to book a next-day appointment for patient at UTC.
3. EHS transports the patient to VCMH UTC, patient assessed by a nurse and treated by an EHS virtual physician.
4. After EHS phone assessment, patient may be instructed to go to VCMH. EHS will phone VCMH nursing team, provide information and inform patient may be coming to the site and be treated by an EHS virtual physician.
5. EHS transports the patient to the nearest appropriate emergency department.





Victoria Consolidated Memorial Hospital UTC Update – After hours access (con't)

Benefits:

- Keeps EHS ambulance in community
- Improves after hours access for EHS Baddeck catchment area residents

Next steps:

- Explore any additional supports local physicians may be able to provide
- Evaluate the new model



VCMH Working Group

- Formed October 2022
- Meets monthly in person or virtually
- Purpose: Transition from UTC to 24/7 emergency access to care. Discuss opportunities around recruitment, retention, healthcare access and health services planning for VCMH.
- Members include: NSH/VCMH staff, local physicians, physician recruiters both NSH & community, provincial and municipal governments, CHB, VCMH Foundation, EHS, Alderwood, Wagmatcook & Waycobah First Nations and community members.
- Interested in joining? Contact Andrew Heighton, chair by email at andrew.heighton@nshealth.ca





New care options outside Victoria County

- VirtualCareNS - virtualcarens.ca
- YourHealthNSapp - yourhealthns.ca
- Glace Bay emergency department- expanded hours
- Northside UTC- expanded hours
- CBRH ED - Physician assistant role, new pathway of care for less sick patients
- Additional resources to enhance access- Sydney and Glace Bay Primary Care Clinics
- Cape Breton Newcomer Clinic- unattached newcomers in CBRM
- Ongoing physician recruitment strategy, with a focus on family physicians in CBRM
- Mobile primary care clinics continue throughout the zone, strategically placed in areas with high ED wait times/other pressures
- Primary care clinics in pharmacies - pans.ns.ca/cppcc



Helpful links:

Victoria County Memorial Hospital Community Update - Winter 2024
www.nshealth.ca/eastern-zone-community-information

Where to go for care in Eastern Zone
www.nshealth.ca/documents-and-reports/where-go-health-care-eastern-zone



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

April 15, 2024

Mr. MacDougall mentioned the challenges that were in the Neil's Harbour area last year and over the year there has been a lot of work has been done and there is a good partnership there with EHS.

Councillor Organ said there is still almost a 2 month wait to see a doctor, 6 weeks for a nurse practitioner and that all contributes to the ER visits.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said the biggest complaint he hears is how long it takes to get a doctor's appointment and asked Mr. MacDougall if he could get the numbers of people waiting to see a doctor and Mr. Cox said he can take that back.

The UTC in Baddeck will remain in place at this time.

The doctors are not in favour of emergency care currently. We are trying to look for physicians who are interested in emergency care.

Councillor Longva commented on the older doctors that would be on call all the time, how come these new doctors can't take turns on going on call.

Mr. MacDougall said it seems doctors today want a better life/work balance.

Warden Morrison clarified that if someone comes up to the doors of the hospital at 7pm and need help, the hospital has to help them and Mr. MacDougall said that is correct, healthcare professionals are held to standards and have to proceed as such, that being said, 911 will probably be called if the patient is not at a regional, trauma centre.

Warden Morrison asked if NSHA will be coming back to the community for a town hall and Mr. MacDougall said yes, we can do that again once we have the appropriate information to share.

Mr. Cox said the working group fell behind on communications to the community.

CBRL (Cape Breton Regional Library) – LISA MULAK and ERIN PHILLIPS

Two board members were also present, Eldon MacDonald and Terry Murray.

Ms. Mulak addressed a letter she sent to Council concerning the deficiencies in the built environment of the Baddeck and Ingonish library branches.

In Baddeck there is no accessible parking.

In Ingonish there is no access to a public washroom.

The landlord at the library in Ingonish let the CBRL know that the lease will be terminated in April 2025.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said finding a new location for a library in Ingonish will be difficult. Maybe other locations near by can be looked at, the bookmobile will be an option as well.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

April 15, 2024

Ms. Phillips said having a physical location, is still ideal rather than just relying on the bookmobile and would rather keep the library in Ingonish because its so central.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee thought about approaching the developers at Ski Cape Smokey.

Ms. Mulak requested to meet every few months to discuss location options and Deputy Warden Dauphinee is more than willing to do that and asked they reach out to him.

Warden Morrison said he will be having a chat with the Baddeck fire chief to figure out who is responsible for what at the Baddeck branch.

Warden Morrison also mentioned that there is a cut sidewalk right in front of the library so that could be used for an accessible parking spot.

Ms. Mulak asked about snow removal and Warden said that will also be brought up with the fire department and Warden Morrison invited Ms. Mulak to the discussions with the fire chief and will reach out to her with a time.

Councillor MacLeod asked about the Village doing snow removal and Commissioner Crowder said he can follow up on it.

OTHER

CAO MacEachen provided Council with an update on Victoria Co-Op Fisheries and the acceptance of fish offal. Council requested a letter be sent from the Municipality to Victoria Co-Op Fisheries c/o Osborne Burke and the board of directors based on his written request on April 15, 2024, granting an extension of accepting fish offal until May 31, 2024. There will be no further extensions granted.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions.

NEXT MEETING

Next Committee of the Whole meeting is April 23, 2024, the Upland Meeting.

ADJOURN

Warden Morrison called to adjourn at 3:35pm