



Prince Edward County Chamber of Tourism & Commerce

116 Main Street, Picton, Ontario, K0K 2T0

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PRESS RELEASE

February 12, 2009

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

QHC needs to remember the Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital is a Community Hospital

Prince Edward County, Ontario – The Prince Edward County Chamber of Tourism & Commerce in partnership with its neighbour – Quinte West Chamber of Commerce submits the following statement to address the options presented to the community by Quinte Health Care (QHC). These options include the reduction of services at the Picton, Trenton, and Bancroft Hospitals in an effort by the organization to balance the hospital's budget by the end of the 2009/10 fiscal year as directed by the South East Local Health Integration Network (SE LHIN).

QHC is not alone in their request, all over the province communities are being asked to make do with smaller hospitals and fewer services despite the reality of aging populations and the expected need for clinical services. The trend towards closing or downsizing community hospitals is alarming. It is hard to believe that in a province the size of Ontario, and with our provincial government spending 50% of its budget on health care that our hospitals are being forced to take care of patients with less money per case and shorter hospital stays compared to other provinces.

The Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital was built to meet the needs of this community and serves our year-round residents as well as a seasonal population of over 400,000. Our hospital has a tremendous reputation throughout the region for providing excellent care to patients and many in the community feel that if we do not make a stand for our hospital now the services will be chipped away in the years to come until it is nothing but a medical outpost to Belleville General Hospital.

All options that have been presented assume the Alternate Long-term Care (ALC) patients have been transferred to suitable places. No solution to this problem has come forward for residents in Prince Edward County. The QHC news release states there are 190 new nursing home beds opening in the region however none of these beds are in the County. In fact, with the closing of Picton Manor the County will lose 78 nursing home beds. In addition the QHC news release states "diagnostic services, outpatient clinics and physiotherapy remain the same at all sites", however, the Picton hospital lab is still scheduled to be closed in April 2009.

The economic impact of losing a fully operational hospital in our community would be huge. Companies would lose the ability to attract highly skilled workers to our area, and why would retirees want to live in a community without a hospital close by.

In an area where finding good paying jobs are at a premium, there would be a huge economic impact to Prince Edward County if nursing and other support staff positions were lost.

The Prince Edward County Chamber of Tourism & Commerce would like to add its voice to the growing number insisting that QHC stop reducing the services at the Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital. We support the Mayor and Council when they say enough is enough. We support our nurses and doctors who are concerned for the patients and the impact these QHC proposals would have on their families. The time has come to take a serious look at the possibility of dismantling QHC and give the hospitals back to the communities that have built, loved and supported them over the years. This issue is not just about keeping our community hospital strong but keeping our community vibrant.

Prince Edward County Chamber of Tourism & Commerce
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