

Report to Council

Report Title: South Bruce Grey Health Centre Update – November 2022

Prepared By: Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer

Department: Administration

Date: November 29, 2022

Report Number: CAO2022-35 **File Number:** C11AD

Attachments: N/A

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number CAO2022-35 – South Bruce Grey Health Centre Update –November 2022, prepared by Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer for information purposes.

Report:

Background:

On December 20th, 2021 the South Bruce Grey Health Centre (SBGHC) released an announcement regarding a reduction in hospital services at both the Walkerton and Chesley Hospital sites. This reduction included overnight emergency room closures and the Walkerton Hospital and modified services to the inpatient unit at the Chesley hospital in addition to the existing close overnight emergency services in Chesley. These closures lead to a joint third-party review initiated by Brockton Council. The review was considered by Brockton Council on February 22, 2022 and sent and discussed with various parties and the Province.

After recruitment efforts by the SBGHC resulted in a more stable staffing compliment Walkerton Hospital resumed 24-hour emergency services on Monday, May 9th, 2022 and Chesley resumed on June 15th, 2022. While services have resumed, staff levels are critically fragile even with the addition of agency nurses. This will continue to result in periodic and extended closures due to lack of RN's and RPN's to cover the emergency department.

On October 6th it was further announced that Chesley hospital will be closing for 8 weeks as of October 7th due to nursing shortages. Services in Chesley are now scheduled to resume on December 5th, 2022 (5) days per week, Monday to Friday, during the hours of 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The ED will remain closed overnight and on weekends. Communications are a high priority to ensure area residents are consistently informed of ER changes.

Ongoing advocacy and meetings have occurred informing Provincial representatives of the critical concerns related to these closures and that a long-term solution related to nursing staff needs to be a priority.

Analysis:

This report provides an update to Council on this important matter based on information received from Michael Barrett, CEO as a result of a meetings held on November 24, 2022 and November 25th, 2022 with the local Mayor's and CAO's.

The following outlines the matters communicated:

- Michael Barrett, CEO reported he has decided not to renew his contract with the SBGHC which will end on March 31st, 2023.
- A Request for Proposal has been initiated by the Board for a consulting firm to recruit for the Chief Executive Officer and President role to ensure a transition period.
- The SBGHC sites are very busy due to the respiratory sickness that is prevalent right now
- Communications related to the Mennonite community for ER Closures were discussed – varying methods of communication are being used to reach this community.
- Following the Chesley community meeting and the discussion around hiring unvaccinated nurses the SBGHC is conducting a risk assessment and analyzing from an infection control standpoint the potential of hiring unvaccinated nurses to meet the human resource demands. Majority of hospitals have implemented a mandatory vaccine policy whereas SBGHC did not. Staff are currently being surveyed for input. This would be one of the few hospitals in the Province to hire unvaccinated workers should this proceed. The Board and Management will do a thorough consideration and analysis of the climate for existing staff before proceeding in this manner.
- Kincardine CT scanner addition is currently closed in and under construction. Will be installed in February and operational by March.
- MPP's have indicated to the SBGHC Board, CEO and Mayor's that the ER closures are a number one priority matter. Regular communications occur with Michael Barrett, CEO.
- There is an agreement in place for SBGHC physicians from Chesley to assist Hanover during ER closures to help cover the added load at the Hanover hospital.
- All area hospitals CEO's meeting every three weeks to discuss human resource capacity and expected closures. Last minute closures based on sick calls etc. can lead to unexpected closures that cannot be avoided. These closures are communicated as soon as possible and residents are required to attend their next closest ER.
- An update is scheduled prior to Christmas so members can communicate with the communities on any expected closures.

This update is provided for information purposes.

Strategic Action Plan Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Strategic Action Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

- Recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision

N/A

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| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community | N/A |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life | N/A |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment | N/A |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development | N/A |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance | N/A |

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective?
N/A

There are no financial implications with this report.

Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer