

# *Rural Municipality of Belfast*

Mayor: Garth Gillis; Chief Administrative Officer: Bob Brooks; *Incorporated 1972*

August 10, 2021

Mr. Andrew MacDougall  
Executive Director  
Health PEI  
Community Health and Seniors Care  
16 Garfield Street - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
PO Box 2000  
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8

**RE: *Walk-in Clinic for Rural Municipality of Belfast Area***

Dear Mr. MacDougall,

Thank you for speaking with our representatives in a recent June 2021 telephone meeting to discuss health matter concerns in the Rural Municipality of Belfast area.

In that meeting with yourself, Councillor Mary Mecher-Carlson, and our Chief Administrative Officer Bob Brooks, the concern was raised about the need for a Walk-in Clinic for our area, and a similar example of the Walk-in Clinic at the Morrell Firehall was sited.

As discussed, with the growing population across Prince Edward Island (PEI) and in our Municipality, and the lack of doctors available (3 - 5 year waiting lists currently), it is often necessary for residents to attend a Walk-in Clinic or an Emergency Room for their health needs. The closest Walk-in Clinic (depending where you live in our municipal area is approximately 35 minutes away in Montague, or even longer if you go to Charlottetown.

Even if you make it to a Walk-in Clinic, or an Emergency Room at the Hospital in Montague or Charlottetown, your wait time could be as much as 2 - 8 hours.

In the June 2019 Mandate Letter to the Minister of Health from the Premier, one of the Mandate Priorities included: *“Work collaboratively with Health PEI to strengthen and improve access to front-line health care services in Island communities”*

As per your June 2021 telephone meeting, you had suggested, that in order to get the ball rolling, for Health PEI to address the issue and work with the Municipality; you would need an official request from the Rural Municipality of Belfast that was supported by your Council.

I am very pleased to say that at our June 16, 2021 Council Meeting, Council members gave **UNNAIMOUS** support, to sending a formal letter to Health PEI to officially request that this matter be looked at, and that the Rural Municipality of Belfast would work with Health PEI to look at possible solutions.

Regarding possible solutions, our Municipality noted that:

- We may have more than one possible location in our Municipality where a Walk-in Clinic could be set up for one or two days per week;
- We have an example in the Morrell Walk-in Clinic that could be a possible model;
- We have a Senior's establishment (John Gillis Lodge) that utilizes a Nurse Practitioner; and
- The concept of this Walk-in Clinic being used as a training facility/opportunity was also raised.

For your information:

- The Rural Municipality of Belfast is the second-largest municipality in PEI by area;
- The population at the 2016 census was 1,670; however, due to recent pandemic circumstances and restrictions, the area is starting to see a significant growth, as people are moving out of the major centers and moving into the more rural areas for quality of life;
- Current access to primary care is Montague or Charlottetown; and
- Wait-times in Montague and Charlottetown have been reported to be 2 - 8 hours.

The Rural Municipality of Belfast, our Council and our staff, are looking forward to hearing from you, so we can start the process toward getting a Walk-in Clinic for our area, and any other solutions that might be possible

Looking forward to working in collaboration with you.

Sincerely



Garth Gillis - Mayor  
Rural Municipality of Belfast

Cc: The Honourable James Aylward - Health and Wellness

The Honourable Darlene Compton - MLA for Belfast - Murray River

Council - Rural Municipality of Belfast

Bob Brooks - Rural Municipality of Belfast - Chief Administrative Officer

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