

TAB 9



**CITY OF PORT COLBORNE
TOWNSHIP OF WAINFLEET
HEALTHCARE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

MEDIA

Media

December 15, 2005	Article in Welland Tribune – Port Hospital is safe: Shragge
December 12, 2007	News Release - Ministry of Health and Long Term Care – McGuinty government supports Modern emergency Care in Port Colborne
	Letter to the Editor – Dr. Christian Proulx, Port Colborne
July 26, 2008	Letter to the Editor – Dr. Christopher Offierski
2006	Article by David Levine – Emergency room Waiting: Not Really necessary (from Longwoods Review, Vol 4 No. 1, 2006)
August 23, 2008	Article in Fort Erie Times Doctors at DMH release statement about “Improvement” Plan – Dr. R. Colorado, Dr. R.J. Kamatovic, Dr. B. Dageleish, Dr. N. Jayawardene, Dr. M. Kim.
	Letter to the Editor – Niagara Falls Review – Patricia K. Teal M.D.
	Letter to the Editor – Niagara Falls Review – Dr. David Henry
	Letter to the Editor – Welland Tribune – Dr. Kim Scher, Fort Erie
	Letter to the Editor – St. Catharines Standard – Andrew Watts, Wainfleet
	Letter to the Editor – Niagara this Week – Sandy Annunziata

Welland Tribune (ON)
Final
News, Thursday, December 15, 2005, p. A1 / FRONT

Port hospital is safe: Shragge

Allan Benner
Tribune

WELLAND - There's no dark conspiracy.

There's no secret agenda regarding the future of the Niagara Health System's smaller hospitals in Port Colborne, or Fort Erie for that matter.

There is, however, a "non-negotiable commitment" to maintaining "viable and robust" hospitals in those communities, said Dr. Bill Shragge, NHS chief of staff.

And concerns raised to the contrary are "absolutely inaccurate."

"I can't say strongly enough and emphatically enough that the future of the hospital is absolutely not in jeopardy, nor has it ever been in jeopardy," he said. "And let me blunt, there is no nefarious plot."

He was referring to concerns raised by Port Colborne family physician Dr. Christian Proulx, who questioned the health system's commitment to the city's hospital.

"We are committed to staffing a 24/7 ER (emergency department), we are committed to maintaining it and indeed the volumes have steadily been increasing," Shragge said in an interview, Wednesday.

"In terms of the constant care beds (CCU), we have said repeatedly that the actions we are taking, which are temporary - and I emphasize temporary closure of that unit - are being done for patient safety reasons, as a result of the fact that we don't currently have enough nursing staff to maintain that unit in a stable configuration."

He said the health system has been "aggressively" working towards recruiting nurses with the required training for the department.

"The sense that the Niagara Health System has been asleep at the switch is nonsensical," Shragge said.

The health system is well aware of the stress the "amazing staff" have been under in light of the shortage of nurses.

"We have dedicated nurses beyond belief who are working double time, triple time," he said. "And the fact of the matter is we have to recruit into the system to support those people."

Recruitment efforts are already showing signs of success. "We're working with some nurses now and we're very optimistic," he said.

In fact, he said the health system is currently in negotiations with one nurse for Port Colborne "and the hope is that we can begin to get these units back up and running. We are pulling out every stop and we're getting the support."

The decision to close the four-bed constant care units in the two hospitals - Fort Erie's closed in November and Port Colborne's is slated to close Friday - was made after a careful analysis of the situation.

For instance, there are nurses with the required cardiac care training working in the hospital's emergency department. However, concerns have been raised that asking those nurses to take the CCU patients under their wing, even on a temporary basis, would sacrifice patient care in both departments.

Shragge is a heart surgeon with a concise knowledge of the need for nursing staff trained in the care of cardiac patients, as well as the potential consequences of trying to "pull it together with Band-Aids and chewing gum" to keep it running.

"We have to do what's right for patients and we really struggled over this, but the right thing to do was this temporary closure until we can support." Proulx referred to a secret 10-year plan, Shragge said. But that plan simply doesn't exist.

Although the NHS, under its former executive director, did complete a preliminary "strategic planning" exercise about three years ago, things have changed a great deal since then. Any plans that exercise may have produced are no longer relevant.

"There is no such thing as a 10-year-plan; there is no strategic plan," he said. "The last two years have been so tumultuous that we're just now beginning to get stabilized again."

Another issue Proulx raised was the transferring of patients from overcrowded hospitals in other communities.

It's sometimes referred to as "dumping patients," although that's a term Shragge finds troubling "because we're talking about patients."

The Niagara Health System is a multi-site system, which gives it the opportunity to move patients around from hospital to hospital where space is available. It makes little sense to allow one hospital to become overcrowded while another hospital has space available.

"This is not about turning Port Colborne, or Fort Erie for that matter, into a chronic care hospital, absolutely not," he said. "But if we have empty beds isn't this a tremendous opportunity to take advantage of the fact that we are a system and move patients about the system appropriately."

Shragge also commended Port Colborne's family doctors who have taken on the responsibility of running the hospital's emergency department.

"It's almost as busy as Welland," he said. "It's a very effective ER, and by the way, with some pride, it's staffed almost exclusively by our own Port Colborne physicians which is part of our commitment to that unit."

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Document number: news·20051215·XZ·22609

For Immediate Release
December 12, 2007
2007/nr-206

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS MODERN EMERGENCY CARE IN PORT COLBORNE

Government Approving Renovation of ER At Port Colborne General Hospital Site

PORT COLBORNE – The McGuinty government is improving access to emergency services in the Port Colborne area by approving a \$400,000 renovation of the emergency department at Niagara Health System's Port Colborne General Hospital site, Deputy Premier and Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“Our government is committed to lowering wait times in emergency rooms because Ontarians deserve faster access to care,” Smitherman said. “This new state-of-the-art emergency department will help provide this improved care to Port Colborne area residents.”

The renovated emergency department will feature a new nursing triage area, improvements to the patient waiting area, better security features and infection control improvements.

“We’re excited to be moving forward with this important upgrade of our Emergency Department at the Port Colborne General Site,” said Debbie Sevenpifer, president and CEO of the Niagara Health System. “A modernized ER will be a better functioning ER to serve the needs of our patients.”

“Our government is making sure that Port Colborne area residents have the best possible access to hospital emergency care,” said Kim Craitor, MPP for Niagara Falls.

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Media Contacts:

Laurel Ostfield
Minister's Office
416-212-4048

David Jensen
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 1-866-532-3161

This news release, along with other media materials, such as matte stories and audio clips, on other subjects, are available on our website at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca> under the News Media section.

For more information on achievements in health care, visit: www.resultsontario.gov.on.ca.

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