



June 22, 2022

Southern Health-Santé Sud - Community Update – Altona & Surrounding Areas

IMPORTANT UPDATE ABOUT OUR LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Altona Community Medical group is facing ongoing human resource challenges that will temporarily affect Emergency Department services at the Altona Community Memorial Health Centre.

We acknowledge the inconvenience this has on the community and endeavor to continue all efforts to reinstate a 24/7 emergency department. Increasing and preserving our current medical staff resources, as we did with our nursing resources, remains a top priority.

Emergency Department Services – Reduced Summer Hours

- There will be no Emergency Department Services at the Altona Community Memorial Health Centre Monday to Thursday effective **July 4, 2022** until further notice.
- The Altona Clinic will offer enhanced primary care services Monday to Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please call the Altona Clinic to book a same day appointment.
- The Emergency Department will be open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday for 12 hours from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. effective July 4, 2022,
- Outpatient services such as lab work, minor procedures and wound care currently provided through the Emergency Department will continue to be scheduled as required.

The fastest way to get help for a medical emergency is to dial 911.

Emergency Response Services and Inter-facility transfer services will be available to ensure residents in the community and surrounding area will continue to get the care they need when they need it. Paramedics are highly trained to provide a wide array of care on site and on the way to hospital, including triaging and treating injuries and medical emergencies. While the service change is in effect, patients with higher acuity needs will be temporarily directed to the appropriate setting for the care they need. This would include Boundary Trails Health Centre in Morden/Winkler and Morris General Hospital, both of which are about 40 kilometres away.

How will this Impact Inpatient Services at the Altona Community Memorial Health Centre?

These changes will not affect hospital in-patient services at the Altona Community Memorial Health Centre.

Accessing Primary Care (Medical Clinic Services)

Access to primary care services will continue, but will be challenged in light of the medical staff shortages we are experiencing. We encourage you to continue accessing primary health care as you have, i.e. Altona Medical Clinic and to please be understanding of the current human resource challenges.

All general, less serious health care needs can be addressed by calling Health Links—Info Santé at 1-888-315-9257.

What you can Expect

The recruitment of clinical staff is a constant challenge in rural communities throughout the province and the country. Altona is no exception. We are experiencing unprecedented physician resource challenges across our region.

This temporary service change within Altona's emergency department will allow us to maintain core services while working with limited physician options until such time that we can stabilize the workforce in order to provide high quality, predictable and sustainable health care services that meet the needs of the community of Altona and surrounding area, now and into the future.

Site leaders and the health region will continue to work in collaboration with the community, physicians and staff, to help achieve that goal. We are committed to keeping the public informed.

For more information or to request an interview, contact:

Media Intake Line

T 204-424-2329

mediarelations@southernhealth.ca

Southern Health-Santé Sud would like to take this opportunity to thank health care providers for their continued hard work and their dedication throughout this period. We also thank the community for your patience and understanding during this time.