



SOUTH BRUCE GREY
HEALTH CENTRE
CHESLEY | DURHAM | KINCARDINE | WALKERTON

May 3, 2024
Mayor Eccles
Office of the Mayor
402813 Grey Road, RR 2 Durham, ON N0G 1R0

RE: Transition of Durham Hospital Acute Inpatient Care Beds

Dear Mayor Eccles,

Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding our decision to transition the 10 inpatient beds currently at the Durham site to the Walkerton and Kincardine sites on June 3rd. Our priority is to provide a safe work environment for our staff and quality care for our patients across all of the South Bruce Grey Health Centre sites.

The Board of Director's decision to transition the inpatients beds from the Durham site was made due to a critical shortage of nurses, which is anticipated to intensify during the summer season. After reviewing all options, the SBGHC leadership team and Board agreed that this was the only option to keep the emergency department open with adequate staff.

This decision is not about financials or cutting costs. Simply put, we do not have enough nurses to keep both the inpatient beds and emergency department open at the Durham site. Relocating these beds will allow us to keep the emergency department open at the Durham site with the staff we have.

We have experienced significant staff shortages for the past five years which is the main reason our emergency departments have had closures and reduced hours. Our team has been working tirelessly to recruit more nurses but the reality is that there is a provincial – and national – shortage of health care workers. We will continue our efforts to bring more nurses to South Bruce Grey to care for our communities.

We are committed to keeping the Durham Hospital open and providing care at that site to the community.

Patients in need of emergency care can continue to access the Durham emergency department daily from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Patients who need to be admitted will be transferred to another site. This process is already in place and is common practice for hospital systems across the province to ensure our patients are getting the specialized care they need, in the right place.

We will continue to advocate on behalf of our patients and staff and are working with both the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health to ensure all SBGHC sites continue to provide care to our communities.



I also wanted to address the threatening comments you made at regional council on April 30th towards our President and CEO, where you stated,

“One statement that I put out there verbally has been that I told the CEO and President of the South Bruce Grey association that to keep her hands off the Durham hospital and I’ll promise to keep my hands off of your throat.”

Your comments are completely unacceptable. At SBGHC, we have and will continue to enforce a zero-tolerance policy for any words or actions that constitute violence, threats of violence, intimidation or harassment. You are a leader in this community and inciting violence, appearing to incite or condoning violence will only cause further division and harm. I am requesting you formally apologize to our President and CEO about whom this threat was made.

In addition, our view is that your behaviour was a breach of the Municipality of West Grey code of conduct Rule 12 which states: *All members have a duty to treat members of the public, one another and staff appropriately and without abuse, bullying or intimidation and to ensure that their work environment is free from discrimination and harassment.*

We have always been open to conversations and engagement with you and our community. Ongoing engagement, especially during these more difficult times, will continue to be a priority; however, we will not under any circumstance put the safety and security of our staff at risk.

We all have one shared common goal - to ensure that our community receives safe and high-quality health care. With this in mind, I hope we can work together collaboratively to achieve this.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Bagshaw'.

Jim Bagshaw
South Bruce Grey Health Centre Board Chair

CC:

Kerri Mighton, Interim Chief Administrative Officer, Municipality of West Grey
Rick Byers, MPP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
Hon. Lisa Thompson, MPP, Huron-Bruce
All Grey and Bruce County municipalities
Ontario Central Local Health Coalition, Grey-Bruce Region