

CIUSSS de l'Estrie CHUS Health woes continue with decrease in services in Magog, Potton and Stanstead



THE SCOOP

MABLE HASTINGS

On Tuesday, April 3, The Memphremagog Watchdog for Health Services Committee held a press conference in Potton at the Town Hall with the purpose being to deplore the decrease of health services in Magog, Potton and Stanstead. Jean-Guy Gingras, President, Philippe Dutil, Mayor of Stanstead and Jacques Marcoux, Mayor of Potton were all in attendance and took turns speaking. With over 90 in attendance, those gathered attested to the decrease in services in Potton that they have suffered since the death of Dr. Jean-Louis Arseneau in November of 2014 who, to date, has not yet been replaced. The three and a half year wait with no replacement found has left many of Dr. Arseneau's patients in limbo and suffering desperately seeking a solution to their medical needs.

Although the CIUSSS de L'Estrie CHUS has made some efforts to find a doctor, according to Mayor Jacques Marcoux, the efforts made have not been given the priority necessary or the urgency in finding a permanent solution.

"For example," stated Marcoux, "the last medical graduates in Sherbrooke were not even informed of the availability of a position at the CLSC in Mansonville. We currently have three physicians practicing here on a part-time basis which is equivalent to 1.2 full-time physicians."

With two of these three doctors likely to retire shortly, Potton residents will again find themselves in a situation similar to what Dr. Arseneau's patients have been living since his death. This poses a serious threat to the health care of citizens in the rural community where services are vital and much needed.

More recently, the social worker for senior services support program has been seconded from the CLSC in Mansonville and attached to the GMF in Magog. This toppled with the fact that the Physiotherapist position has been removed from the organizational chart of the CLSC and that frequently the nurses services are needed in Magog and thus patient appointments in Potton cancelled; all of these adverse realities are negatively impacting services.

The Township of Potton and the surrounding municipalities are happy with

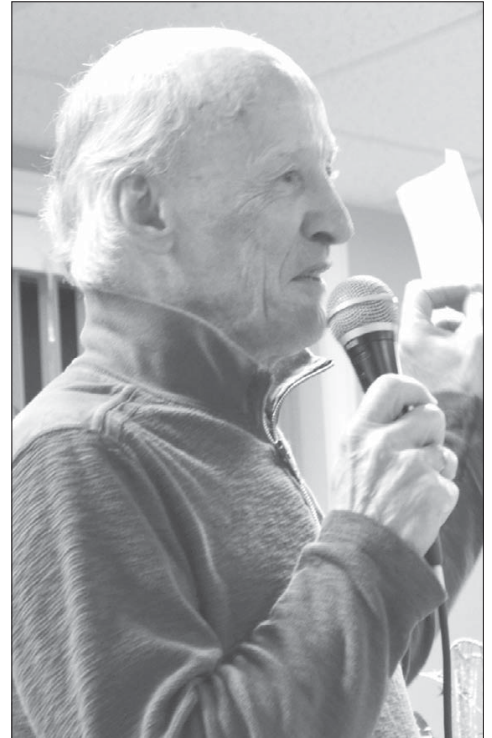
and have been encouraged to rely on the CLSC services in Mansonville and they want to keep this important health service available. It is important to note that when the CLSC came to Potton, many residents took a drastic change in believing that to keep the service close by, it had to be used and accepted and many had faith and did just that. Files were transferred and new medical support and bonds were made with the local doctors and staff.

Ms. Gauthier, Executive Director of the CIUSSS de l'Estrie CHUS, has more than once stated publicly that the CLSC's of Potton and Stanstead were not threatened with closure. While this is somewhat reassuring, on the other hand, the decrease in services and staff is not!

"As mayor of the Township of Potton," said Marcoux, "I invite the management of the CIUSSS de l'Estrie CHUS to call upon us for help. The provincial law regarding municipal competencies specifies in article 91 that a municipality can grant an aid to the exploitation of a health facility."

Many feel that the CIUSSS de l'Estrie CHUS has, in the past, encouraged and emphasized the need for the population to have a voice and to be a part of the discussion. If today's gathering was any indication, the population is speaking and it is time for a solution to be found.

"I wish to remind the public that the CIUSSS de l'Estrie CHUS preaches a pop-



COURTESY

Jacques Marcoux, Mayor of Potton

ulation approach focused on the development of communities," concluded Mayor Marcoux. "The CLSC Mansonville situation, in my opinion, goes against this approach."

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