



# Society of Rural Physicians of Canada Soci t  de la m decine rurale du Canada

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**News Release:**

**For Immediate Release**

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## **The Impact of Closures Concerning for Health Care in Rural Newfoundland**

The Society of Rural Physicians of Canada says that cost containment can be done for rural health services without the drastic cuts the government of Newfoundland and Labrador has announced for communities including Flower's Cove and Lewisporte. Dr Karl Stobbe, president of the SRPC says, "There are many innovative ways to provide X-ray and laboratory services for isolated populations. Consultation and a review of best practices can still ensure that the most vulnerable and isolated patients do not suffer adverse health effects from the announced closures."

In recent weeks, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador has announced cuts to lab and x-ray services for specific communities in the province. Other suggested possibilities for cuts would also include scaling back existing services to other rural communities throughout central Newfoundland. Such cuts are a drastic contrast to other initiatives in rural Canada that have increased access to services.

The SRPC encourages government and rural physicians to establish and maintain a collaborative and respectful relationship. By working together, the interests of people living in rural communities can be considered before decisions are finalized. Recent decisions were decided without consulting rural physicians. The proposed changes will have a significant impact on the ability of rural physicians practicing in the affected areas to do their jobs. Such changes will also impact physician retention and recruitment to rural communities.

The SRPC is concerned regarding the impact of recent changes for people living in the communities. Patients will have increased difficulty accessing specific services. Specifically, those with mobility challenges, including the disabled and elderly will have longer distances to travel to access lab and x-ray services. People will have no choice but to use more of their personal financial resources to access publicly funded services. People requiring emergent care will not have access to lifesaving diagnostic tools which may result in increased mortality and morbidity.

The SRPC wishes to invite the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to develop a healthy consultative process allowing all to move forward to improve the quality of health care to rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

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Read "Rural Hospital Service Closures" April 09 [http://www.srpc.ca/librarydocs/H\\_closures\\_2009.pdf](http://www.srpc.ca/librarydocs/H_closures_2009.pdf)

Read local newspaper coverage <http://www.northernpen.ca/index.cfm?sid=285816&sc=361> and  
[http://ca.news.yahoo.com/s/cbc/090901/canada/canada\\_newfoundland\\_mayor\\_health901](http://ca.news.yahoo.com/s/cbc/090901/canada/canada_newfoundland_mayor_health901)

### About the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada

The Society of Rural Physicians of Canada (SRPC) is the national voice of Canadian rural physicians. Founded in 1992, the SRPC's mission is to provide leadership for rural physicians and to promote sustainable conditions and equitable health care for rural communities. On behalf of its members and the Canadian public, SRPC performs a wide variety of functions, such as developing and advocating health delivery mechanisms, supporting rural doctors and communities in crisis, promoting and delivering rural medical education, encouraging and facilitating research into rural health issues, and fostering communication among rural physicians and other groups with an interest in rural health care. The SRPC is a voluntary professional organization representing over 3,000 of Canada's rural physicians and comprising 5 regional divisions spanning the country.

Reference <http://www.srpc.ca>