



## MEDIA RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MR# 2018063**

**DATE: 2 Aug 2018**

**RE: Amherst throws its support behind healthcare petition**

**AMHERST, Nova Scotia** – A petition calling on the provincial government and Nova Scotia Health Authority to do more to retain and recruit physicians to Cumberland County that was launched this week by the Cumberland Healthcare Taskforce has the full support of the Town of Amherst.

“The town supports the petition because the steps the taskforce is asking be done would enhance the ability to maintain specialists and recruit them to the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre,” Mayor David Kogon.

“We need an active, dynamic regional hospital complete with a full complement of specialists in order for the Town of Amherst to remain vibrant and be able to attract business here. I can’t imagine a business coming here if we don’t have a vibrant regional hospital.”

The preamble to the petition indicates the catalyst that led the taskforce to launch the petition came from people who were “concerned about the lack of support our physicians are receiving from the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the Department of Health.”

The taskforce, which consists of community leaders, medical professionals and community members, is urging the Health Department, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia and Dalhousie University to open the recently announced Practice Ready Assessment Program to all defined licenced physicians currently practicing in Nova Scotia. It also asks the health authority and Health Department to include local physicians on recruiting teams when attempting to attract doctors to a community.

The goal of the Practice Ready Assessment Program, which was announced this past spring by the province, is to prepare internationally trained doctors for the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada exam that if passed would enable them to obtain a full licence to practice from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia, Kogon, a retired obstetrician and member of the taskforce, said.



Defined licences are given to physicians, mainly specialists, who do not meet the requirements for a full licence but meet the requirements for independent medical practice under supervision and sponsorship. Opening the Practice Ready Assessment Program to them would ensure they had ample opportunity to successfully complete the licensing exam they must pass in order to get a full licence, Kogon said.

He also said it made sense to include local physicians when attempting to recruit doctors because they know the communities in which they live and can help new physicians develop a practice that interests them and is well matched to meet the needs of the community.

The petition can be signed at Amherst town hall, which is located 98 Victoria Street and is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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