



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 20230014

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RE: Watson named Cumberland region's first ever Community Navigator

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Allison Watson is the Cumberland region's first ever Community Navigator.

Watson's main role will be working with the Cumberland Physician Recruitment Committee, Cumberland Physician Retention and Appreciation Committee and the Cumberland Health Professionals Recruitment and Retention Committee to attract and retain physicians and other health-care professionals to the area as well as working to retain those currently serving in the Cumberland region.



**ALLISON WATSON IS THE CUMBERLAND REGION'S FIRST EVER COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR.
(TOM McCOAG / TOWN OF AMHERST)**

The Community Navigator position was approved in June 2022 when the Town of Amherst and the Municipality of Cumberland agreed to form a two-year partnership with the three committees in order to establish a regional approach to the area's efforts to attract and retain doctors and other health-care professionals such as nurses and X-ray technicians.





Each municipality has agreed to provide \$50,000 per year for two years to cover the salary and expenses associated with operating the office.

Watson will also act as a liaison between the committees and the two municipal units.

“I’m excited to tackle the position of the Community Navigator for the town and county,” she said. “I look forward to building upon the wonderful the work of our three recruitment and retention committees.

“With my personal background as a patient in the health-care system in Nova Scotia, I know the importance of accessible, trusted, medical treatment and I am thrilled to be a small part of improving the health-care system in the region. I am looking forward to putting Cumberland County and Amherst on the map of places people want to live, work and play!”

Watson joined the Town of Amherst staff in December 2020 as the town’s active living co-ordinator. She maintained that job while also taking on the role of a culture, events and marketing co-ordinator in January 2022.

She is also the author of *Transplanted: My Cystic Fibrosis Double-Lung Transplant Story*. In the book, published by Nimbus Publishing, Watson describes living with the disease and her life-altering surgery.

“Through her role as an active living and culture, events and marketing co-ordinator, Allison gained valuable experience in community engagement and program delivery,” Amherst CAO Jason MacDonald said.

“It was also through this work that Allison developed extensive knowledge of our community resources and program delivery, and it was through this work that Allison built strong connections with various stakeholders in the community. All of this will help her be successful in her new role as the Community Navigator.”

Mayor David Kogon agreed.

“Allison has the skills a Community Navigator needs to be successful,” Kogon said. “We are grateful that we were able to find a person within our own organization that has those skills. It goes to show just how excellent our town staff is.

“I look forward to working with Allison as we work with the municipal units and the committees to attract new physicians and other health-care professionals to this region.”





“We’re extremely pleased the municipality’s funding is going towards hiring someone of Allison’s capabilities and skills,” Municipality of Cumberland Mayor Murray Scott said.

“She’s been involved in the health-care system on a personal basis and I’m sure that’s going help her moving forward with this position as she works with both municipalities.

“Other jurisdictions have navigators in place and I’ve heard many great things about what’s taking place in Pictou and other areas. I’m hoping she’ll look at the successes in other areas so they can be realized here as well.

“We know it’s a provincial responsibility when it comes to health-care recruitment, but we also feel it’s our responsibility as well. We all have to be partners in this and we’re really looking forward with a positive outlook that we’ll see positive results for all of Cumberland County.”

Watson, who recently received a Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal for her service to the community, will begin her new position at the end of February.

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