

## **ANNOUNCED CHANGES TO THE COMMUNITY HOSPITALS**

We were just informed on Tuesday about the changes to the services provided at Stewart Memorial Hospital, Souris Hospital, Community Hospital and Western Hospital. There were no prior consultations or communications with the Union.

So far, we were told that both Souris and Community Hospitals will become “Extended Care Facilities”. In other words, they will provide restorative, palliative, convalescent and respite care. What impact this will have on various services provided by our members, is not known.

When asked if our departments such as Lab and X-Ray would be affected, they had no answer. It should be remembered that these departments in the targeted facilities, provide a wide variety of services to the Clinics in their respective areas. The Clinics appear unaffected by the changes. The Government has also announced that it would maintain the Dialysis Centres. Dialysis requires blood tests immediately prior. Patients in extended care facilities would still require various tests.

Changes were also announced in the Emergency Department at Western Hospital. It will only operate twelve hours per day. A “collaborative approach” will be adopted for the other twelve hours. There will be no doctor on site. Instead, paramedics and nurse practitioners will see the patients. Again, it is not known whether the lab and X-Ray Departments will be operational during those off-hours. If they are not, the level of healthcare provided at Western Hospital will have clearly diminished.

The closure of the hospital at Tyne Valley and its conversion to a long-term care facility will also have an impact.

At this point, it is unknown if or how clerical and admin support positions will be affected. Obviously, the Union will try to do everything in its power to ensure that all IUOE positions are maintained.

Unfortunately, it seems that Government is once again acting on half a plan.

