

Town of Arcola

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OFFICE OF TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
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Arcola, Sask.
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RE: Arcola Health Centre Emergency Department Temporary Closure

Dear Honourable Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan,

The Arcola Town Council is very unhappy with the Saskatchewan Health Authorities decision to temporarily close the Emergency Department at the Arcola Health Centre. Along with our residents and surrounding communities we are very concerned with the level of emergency health services available to us at this time.

Were you aware that STARS landed in Arcola 19 times in the last year? Our town with a population of around 650 had the same number of STARS landings as Estevan with a population of over 11,000. Regina with a population of over 215,000 also had 19 STARS landings last year. This shows you how necessary and vital the emergency services are to Arcola and surrounding communities. Were you also aware that there are only 2 ambulance vehicles in our area that serve approximately a 200 km perimeter, equal to about 3,000 square kilometers? In the heart of oil and farming communities can you imagine the emergencies that are to come up in this large of an area. It would not take long for 2 ambulances to be used at one time, leaving families to drive 45-60 minutes to the next nearest ER.

With this in mind, the Arcola Town Council questions the Government of Saskatchewan's decision as we feel this was not a well laid out plan, and certainly not communicated properly. As municipal leaders our residents turn to us for answers, and right now we cannot give them any so would like you to clarify:

1. Why can we not wait until (or if) it is necessary to close the emergency department and redirect staff? We were given less than 48 hours notice of the closure so you have proven it can be done in a timely manner.
2. As our cases in the South East have remained very low or at zero for weeks now why can we not send one nurse and doctor at a time for training instead of completely closing our ER? Certainly, it cannot take 4+ months for these already highly trained and capable medical staff to be trained for something else.
3. What will happen with all of our doctors, nurses and staff until cases increase in the province? It could be months before they need to be redirected so where will they go and what will they do in the mean time?
4. Do you have a timeline for this temporary closure? When will it reopen and do you have a plan? Will it have to wait until a vaccine is created, which could be another 1-2 years?

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At this time, you are putting potential COVID-19 patients ahead of current emergency patients in Arcola, the surrounding municipalities, and the 2 First Nations Reservations that use our health facility. You are putting many more lives at risk with this plan and we urge you to reconsider, or at the very least explain how you came to this conclusion. As municipal leaders and the voice of our residents, we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Arcola Town Council



Keith Erick
Mayor



Christie Hislop
CAO