

# Media Release

## Town of Gander

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Town of Gander urges Central Health to begin taking measures to re-instate obstetrical services at James Paton Memorial Regional Health Centre (JPMRHC)

*(Gander, NL – January 9, 2023)*

Following the dissolution of Central Health's steering committee, formed to decide the location of obstetrical services in Central NL, the Town of Gander is urging Central Health to re-instate obstetrical services at JPMRHC until a final decision on the location(s) is made.

One obstetrical unit has been recommended for the entire central region. The Provincial Government has begun integrating the existing four health authorities into one entity and has determined that the decision on the location of obstetrical services for central will now be made by the Provincial Health Authority (PHA) when it assumes its authority in April.

In the meantime, Central Health has announced that obstetrical services will remain diverted to Central Newfoundland Regional Health Centre in Grand Falls-Windsor.

The Town of Gander is concerned for the health and safety of patients in the region while this vital service is on diversion and is calling for immediate efforts towards re-instating services at JPMRHC in Gander, or alternating diversions until services are reinstated in both locations.

The Town is firm that one unit for the entire central region is not in the best interest of women and babies for the short or long term. Additionally, in keeping JPMRHC on diversion, lives will be at increased risk due to unfavorable driving conditions during the winter months.

The Town is hopeful that Central Health and the new Provincial Health Authority will prioritize patient care in their decision making and appropriately address current human resource challenges to ensure reinstatement of obstetrical services at JPMRHC.

"Recent population and demographic trends, including a population increase of 23% in Gander since 2001, are evidence of sustained growth that is inconsistent with potential decisions to degrade available health services. Elimination of obstetrical services in our community is not in the best interest of women and babies of Gander and the surrounding communities.

We object to Central Health's apparent intent to defer any action on reinstating obstetric services in Gander indefinitely. Inaction on this issue, pending a decision that will not be taken until April, at the earliest, will only result in further deterioration of human resource capacity at JPMRHC and further compromise efforts to reinstate at that time if deemed appropriate. Until a decision to the contrary is taken, obstetrical services remain a core service of JPMRHC. It is imprudent to compromise the new PHA in this manner as they prepare to assume responsibility for patient services in a reimagined health care system." – **Percy Farwell, Mayor**

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