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New Denver emergency department service change

NEW DENVER – In light of the continued challenge to recruit new physicians to New Denver, there will be a change to emergency department hours at Slokan Community Health Centre (SCHC) next month.

Effective Feb. 1, 2018, the emergency department will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays (closed on statutory holidays).

To support local residents, BC Emergency Health Services will be providing additional ambulance coverage in New Denver. This will support 9-1-1 response and ensure patients can be transferred to alternate facilities for care as required.

After Jan. 31, patients requiring emergency care outside of new weekday emergency department hours should:

- In the event of an emergency, call **9-1-1**.
- Visit the emergency department at Arrow Lakes Hospital in Nakusp (open 24/7).
- Call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 (24 hour service) if you are unsure about your need to go to the emergency department.

Interior Health has been recruiting for new physicians for approximately eight months; however, there have been no applicants. One of the barriers in recruiting doctors for the region has been requiring them to cover emergency department services overnight and on weekends. By making this change at the SCHC, it is hoped that physician recruitment efforts will be successful.

“We have been working with our partners in the community and will continue to collaborate to support ongoing access to primary care in New Denver,” says Karen Bloemink, Executive Director IH - East, Hospitals and Communities Integrated Services. “The reality is, we cannot sustain 24/7 emergency department services and, if we continue as we are now, we risk losing our ability to provide ongoing primary care that will meet the majority of health care needs for local residents.”

Interior Health continues to support the recruitment of physicians who are committed to New Denver, and who are interested in providing consistent services to their community.

“Our priority is to ensure residents can access a permanent physician who they see regularly; a physician who is familiar with their history and their ongoing health care needs,” says Bloemink.

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