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Saskatchewan Minister of Health Don McMorris cuts the ribbon at the grand opening of Sun Country Health Region's new Renal Dialysis Unit on March 28. The Unit is a satellite of Regina General Hospital and is located in St. Joseph's Hospital in Estevan. It has the capacity to treat 12 patients. Dignitaries from left to right are Normand Poirier, Executive Director, St. Joseph's Hospital; Doreen Eagles, MLA Estevan; Earl Kickley, Chair Sun Country Regional Health Authority (SCRHA); Don McMorris; Roy Ludwig, Vice Chair, St. Joseph's Hospital; Dr. Vino Padayachee, SCRHA Chief of Staff; Dr. Cameron Wilson, Medical Director, Hemodialysis Unit at Regina General Hospital and southern satellite units, and Cal Tant, CEO of SCRHA.

**Dialysis unit opens in SCHR**

Health Minister Don McMorris officially opened the Sun Country Health Region's new dialysis satellite service located in St. Joseph's Hospital in Estevan. The unit operates three days per week, serving about a dozen patients from

the area who previously traveled to Regina for treatment. "Our government recognizes that the need for dialysis is growing in Saskatchewan," McMorris said. "We are putting patients first by ensuring that wherever possible, these services are available closer to home. This service will help residents of Sun Country Health Region better manage

their disease and improve their quality of life." Sun Country Health Region CEO Cal Tant said the benefits to individuals of removing the trip to Regina three times a week cannot be overstated. "This unit fulfils one of our mission statements - to provide optimum health for the individual throughout their lifespan," McMorris said.

***A Publication of Sun Country Health Region***



***Live. Work. Play.***

# Thoughts:

From the desk of Calvin Tant,  
President/CEO,  
Sun Country Regional Health Authority

The next issue of the Regional Sun in mid-August will be a very important one for you and your family. For the first time, Sun Country Health Region's newsletter for the public will focus on the whole issue of business and household preparation: for every-day emergencies and for an influenza pandemic.

It's difficult, given the busy schedules we all face, to find the time to prepare for something that we don't know will happen. We know we will have a few days off during the year for a vacation, so we plan it. We know the children will return to school in the fall, so we get ready. We know Christmas is coming every year, ready or not.

Emergencies are much more difficult to think about. We don't know what kind of emergency we will face. We don't know how long we might need to look after ourselves. We don't know what services we might lose: water and natural gas, or a disruption in the delivery of groceries to the local store.

But we do know emergencies happen. Like Christmas they occur, ready or not.

The train collision outside Weyburn in early April is a perfect example. The day was proceeding as normal until 8 a.m. when three trains collided and black smoke began to billow into the sky. Nearby families were soon evacuated. They didn't spend the next night in their own beds. That was only a 24-hour emergency but it might have been much longer and more serious.

The emergency Barry Kessler experienced in 2004, outlined in a story in this issue of the Regional Sun, is similar. His day was quite ordinary until he saw smoke coming from his neighbour's tractor.

For our Emergency issue of the Regional Sun, we will gather together some of the best information available. Look for it in your local newspaper.

## For Better Speech & Hearing



### Communication for Life

Speech and language disorders can affect anyone at any age. Millions of infants, children, and adults suffer from a communication or swallowing disorder. Whether it's a difficulty in swallowing or a disorder such as stuttering, delayed language, or a voice problem, a person's ability to learn and interact with others can be affected. If you suspect you or a loved one may be experiencing a communication or a swallowing disorder, consult a speech-language pathologist.

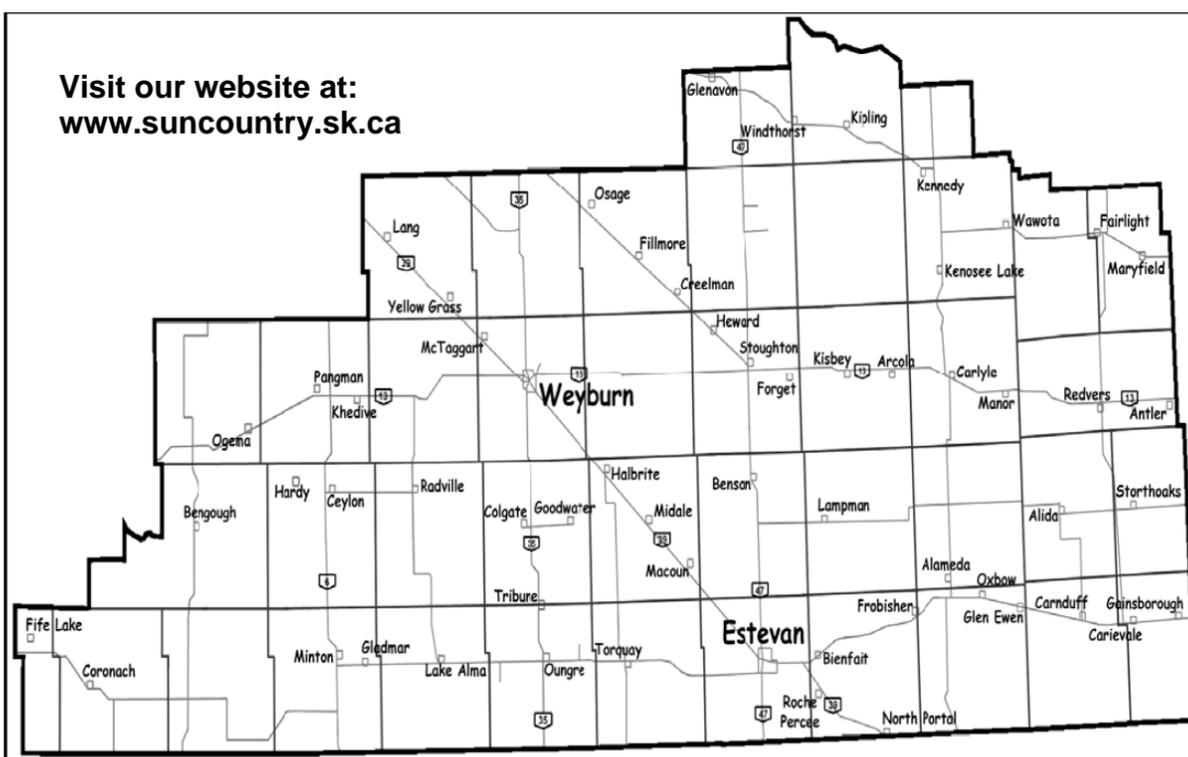
For preschool services call:

**842-8684**

For adult services call:

**842-8443**

Visit our website at:  
[www.suncountry.sk.ca](http://www.suncountry.sk.ca)



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**Weyburn Big Muddy MLA Dustin Duncan joins Sun Country Health Region Vice President of Primary and Integrated Health, Marga Cugnet in the Weyburn General Hospital to announce the expenditure of almost \$1 million in additional funding to upgrade safety equipment in health centres throughout the Region.**

## Sun Country Health Region upgrades safety equipment and training

Sun Country Health Region (SCHR) received nearly \$1 million in new funding from the provincial government in April for safety equipment and training and improvements to hospital surgical facilities.

"There is a pressing need for capital improvements and new equipment in health facilities across Saskatchewan," Health Minister Don McMorris said.

"This investment will help address workplace safety issues and ensure that our hospitals have the appropriate facilities and equipment to meet patients' needs." SCHR will spend about \$900 thousand to

purchase safety equipment and train staff in its use.

Items to be purchased include patient lifts, electric beds, and autoclaves for sterilizing surgical tools.

"We are extremely pleased to be able to purchase this large amount of additional equipment to help improving the working environment of our staff and to assist with patient/resident care," said Cal Tant, CEO Sun Country Health Region.

"With the additional patient lifts and electric beds, we hope to reduce injuries to our staff. We have a large number of staff who are away from work for a lengthy period after an injury," he said.

"The electric beds are also very nice for our patients/residents because it allows them more independence," said Cal.

The investment is expected to support efforts to recruit and retain health professionals by enabling health regions to provide safer, more supportive workplaces.

The funding is part of \$18 million being distributed to all health regions.

Approximately \$13 million will be used for safety equipment and training to reduce workplace injuries, and nearly \$5 million to upgrade hospital operating rooms and recovery rooms.

## SCHR gains VP, Medical

Cal Tant, CEO of Sun Country Regional Health Authority (SCRHA), is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Alain Lenferna as acting Vice President, Medical, effective immediately.

Dr. Lenferna has practiced in Weyburn since 1993, after leaving a private practice in South Africa. He was trained at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, graduating in 1984.

"We are very pleased that Dr. Lenferna has agreed to bring his expertise to assist health care professionals throughout the entire Region," said Cal. "His primary focus will be to maintain quality patient care by managing and organizing all medical practitioners who are within Sun Country Regional Health Authority's jurisdiction."

He will serve Sun Country Health Region on a part-time basis and will continue to maintain his medical practice in Weyburn.

### A garden tip from the Canadian Physiotherapy Association

*Be aware of your posture and body mechanics – Move your feet instead of twisting at your waist when sweeping, raking, mulching or potting. If you can't avoid twisting, tighten your stomach muscles in order to protect your back. Use your legs rather than your back when lifting or unloading heavy bags or pots. Bend your knees, keep your back straight, and hold the object close to your body to prevent unnecessary strain on your back.*

# Eat Healthy

## ***A Healthy Food Policy***

Sun Country Health Region is pleased to release its *Healthy Food Policy* to support our staff, volunteers, clients and visitors in making healthy food choices, as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Healthy choices begin with you. Please help us lead our communities by example.



For more information on the Healthy Food Policy, see your local health care facility, dietitian or call a Public Health Nutritionist at 637-2469.

## **Highlights of the Healthy Food Policy:**

- People have the right to choose what they eat. The policy focuses on making healthy choices available.
- Amounts and types of food offered will be consistent with *Canada's Food Guide*.
- At least 50% of the food available will reflect *Canada's Food Guide*
- Water is served each time food/beverages are offered
- Vending machines (including snack boxes), cafeterias and coffee-room supplies should strive to offer at least one food selection that meets Canada's Food Guide.



# Introducing:

## A new Regional Healthy Food Policy



Sun Country Regional Health Authority is pleased to release its regional Healthy Food Policy. This policy aims to support our staff, volunteers, clients and visitors in making healthy food choices a part of a healthy lifestyle. Healthy choices begin with you.

### Why a Healthy Food Policy?

- To create an environment that supports healthy eating at SCRHA meetings, workshops, and educational sessions
- To take a leadership role in health promotion and disease prevention as outlined in our mission statement.
- To reflect Canada's Food Guide and acknowledge the importance of healthy food choices to long term health
- To have a variety of food choices, in accordance with Canada's Food Guide, readily available for SCRHA employees, volunteers, clients and the public.

### Make the good choices:

•At the vending machine and in the snack rooms

•In the cafeteria

•In your meetings

•At school

### Make Healthy Choices the Easy Choice

People have the right to choose what they eat but we need to make sure the healthy choice is available.

- For more ideas on making healthy food choices check out the *Healthy Food Policy*, *Canada's Food Guide*, your local Dietitian or Public Health Nutritionist.
- Serve healthy food choices at meetings, presentations, and events
- Know what healthy choices are available at work and supplement them with healthy choices from home
- Bring vegetables and dip or sliced fruit instead of cookies and squares for staff coffee breaks.
- Share healthy recipes and snack ideas with co-workers and clients
- Select choices from Canada's Food Guide (available at [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)) – emphasize brightly coloured vegetables and fruit, whole grains, milk sources and meat, beans and nuts

## Healthier choices for your meals:

#### At the Vending Machine and in snack rooms . . .

- Choose water, milk, or 100% fruit or vegetables juice
- Select trail mix, low fat cereal bars, dried fruit and low fat crackers
- If you have a refrigerator in your coffee room, fill it with fresh fruit and vegetables, milk, cheese and sandwiches

#### Meal ideas for Shift Workers . . .

- Whole grain cereal, low-fat milk, banana
- Chicken, lettuce and red pepper wrap with a whole grain tortilla, low fat yogurt and grapes
- Garden vegetable soup, whole grain crackers with cheese, almonds and orange
- Lean beef and vegetable stir fry, wild rice, low-fat milk

#### In the Cafeteria . .

- Ask for smaller portions
- Choose sandwiches or wraps made from whole grains – ask for extra vegetables on the side
- Choose water or milk as a beverage
- Select low fat yogurt, fruit salad or sliced vegetables for a snack

#### Healthy Meetings .

- Consider offering fresh fruit with or instead of the morning muffin tray
- Offer whole grain crackers and cheese for breaks
- Instead of a food refreshment break, try an activity break

# Sun Country Health Region Strategic Plan 2008-2011

## GOAL ONE — Improved Access to Quality Health Care Services

### **Strategic Direction:**

Access to a defined range of quality health services through an integrated, coordinated, and collaborative care model.. Provide a culture of patient/resident/client safety.

**Explanation:** Residents of Sun Country Health Region expect access to quality health care services. This expectation extends along the continuum of health services offered from disease prevention and health promotion through to primary care, home and community care, acute care, rehab services, long-term and palliative care. Achieving this goal will require increased integration and coordination within the SCRHA and improved communication and collaboration with service providers outside of the SCRHA.

### **Strategic Initiatives:**

1. Access to a defined range of quality health services through an integrated, coordinated and collaborative care model.
  - Establish programs of best practice for enhanced care services within SCRHA.
  - Improve patient/resident/client care and service delivery through the primary health care model, better coordination, safe patient/resident/client care and best practice guidelines.
  - Better utilize existing resources by integrating facilities and programs to provide a network of service at the local level.
2. Residents have access to ongoing care from a primary health care provider.
  - Increase access to primary health care by planning and educating how these services are organized, funded and delivered.
  - Enhance primary health and chronic disease management programs through a regional chronic disease management strategy.
  - Provide enhanced emergency medical services.
3. Residents are able to age-in-place in their homes and communities.
  - Enhance community partnerships.
  - Continue developing a Regional Seniors Care Strategy

## GOAL TWO — Effective Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

### **Strategic Direction:**

Healthy environments that allow residents of Sun Country Regional Health Authority to live healthy lifestyles are promoted.

**Explanation:** Effective Health Promotion and Disease Prevention means residents of SCHR will lead healthier lives and take better care of themselves through the personal decisions they make regarding lifestyle behaviour. SCHR will promote healthy decisions by promoting healthy and active lifestyles and providing education and information on quality of life choices.

### **Strategic Initiatives:**

1. Increase the numbers of Sun Country Regional Health Authority residents that are living healthy active lifestyles.
  - Continue to enhance partnerships with local, provincial and national government agencies, education, businesses, aboriginal communities and organizations to explore incentives to encourage individuals, seniors, families, and communities to lead healthy active lifestyles and make healthy choices.
  - Support the development of healthy active communities through education on personal choices and their impact on health status. Support and develop broader healthy public policies.
  - Implement public awareness initiatives regarding personal responsibility, choices and impact on health.
2. Health promotion and disease prevention programs are delivered within the Sun Country Regional Health Authority.
  - Continue to promote, coordinate and facilitate the prioritization of health promotion initiatives to ensure all staff and departments are aligned.
  - Focus on improving the level of health of a community, thus improving the baseline health status.
3. Support children and families to live in a safe, healthy environment.
  - Advocate that every child is provided basic healthy lifestyle education and a safe environment in which to learn and grow.
  - Provide parents and caregivers with the effective tools and supports for parenting.
4. Families in need are supported.
  - Prevent and reduce the harm associated with alcohol, drugs and gambling by providing access to addictions information, prevention services and treatment services.
5. Increase community development activities to enhance community engagement and acceptance of a renewed clinical and community service model.
  - Continue to build and maintain a stakeholder consultation strategy.

# Sun Country Health Region Strategic Plan 2008-2011 continued

## GOAL THREE – Health Provider Retention and Recruitment

**Strategic Direction:** Sun Country Regional Health Authority is a healthy, safe workplace able to attract, support and retain a competent, skilled and engaged workforce.

**Explanation:** Supporting, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce is currently the key challenge facing SCRHA and Saskatchewan's health care system. The SCRHA will provide strong leadership by implementing a comprehensive region-wide human resources strategy designed to retain, recruit and train the qualified and integrated workforce needed to meet the current and future health care needs of the SCRHA.

### **Strategic Initiatives:**

1. Sun Country Regional Health Authority is a healthy, safe workplace.
  - Continue implementation of a safe and healthy workplace strategy across the SCRHA.
  - Use best practice literature to create a culture of quality and patient/resident/client and staff safety.
  - Centralize specialized services when staff is in limited supply.
2. A region-wide 10 Year Workforce Plan that focuses on current and future workforce demands is in place.
  - Develop a Human Resource strategy identifying opportunities, issues, priorities, and plan to implement actions accordingly.
  - Continue implementing the SCRHA Recruitment and Retention Strategy with emphasis on recruiting Aboriginal people into the healthcare workforce.
  - Collaborate with government for increased access and flexibility of training programs and increased educational seats.
  - Collaborate with learning institutions to roll out alternate methods of education including internet based e-learning and distance education.
  - Collaborate with government, associations and educational bodies to streamline the immigration/entry to practice guidelines for smoother transition of international professionals.
3. Workplace dynamics and innovations provide opportunities for job enrichment.
  - Promote innovation in service delivery such as emphasizing interdisciplinary teams to encourage care practitioners to work collaboratively.
  - Strive to enable all healthcare practitioners to work to their full scopes of practice in order to effectively and efficiently utilize the health care workforce.
  - Continue to explore options for staff retention.
  - Implement employee learning plans linked to improving

performance.

4. Develop and implement a succession plan.
  - Develop a strategy that enables the region to meet workforce and leadership needs now and in the future.
  - Collaborate with learning institutions for programs linked to needs for flexibility and increased access to training programs.
  - Implement employee learning plans linked to support advancement and succession planning

## GOAL FOUR — A Sustainable, Efficient, Accountable Health System

**Strategic Direction:** Sun Country Regional Health Authority provides health services through a sustainable, efficient and accountable system.

**Explanation:** Residents of SCRHA expect the best possible care and outcomes when they use the health system and that the SCRHA be accountable for its decisions. Through a combination of best practices, continual review, timely reporting, and innovative delivery options, SCRHA works to deliver a sustainable, efficient, and accountable service.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

1. Sun Country Regional Health Authority provides services that are sustainable, efficient, and accountable.
  - Develop a communication strategy to continue to educate the public regarding access to health care (i.e. primary health care and utilization for appropriate professionals to provide best care).
  - Enhance sustainability through collaborative initiatives, effective communication and coordination of services with all stakeholders.
  - Develop a strategy that responds to short and long term pressures stemming from economic growth in tourism and industry.
  - Develop a 10-year capital plan (infrastructure and equipment) for health care in the SCRHA.
  - Continue to implement the Information Systems plan.
2. Sun Country Regional Health Authority is accountable for the services it provides.
  - Ensure the Strategic Plan is a current document with regular progress communicated.
  - Establish a performance measurement framework consistent with best practice and accreditation standards.
  - Enhance capacity to measure, monitor, and report on health system costs.
  - Advocate SCRHA needs to government based on best practices.
  - Continue to conduct patient/residents/client discharge and satisfaction surveys to measure the quality of a patient/resident/client's experience with the health care system.

**Barry Kessler receives national award:**

# Local volunteer honoured



Photo Courtesy of the Governor-General's Office

**Barry Kessler of Pangman stands with Canada's Governor-General, Michelle Jean.**

An emergency medical responder with Sun Country Regional Health Authority, who saved his neighbour from a burning tractor four years ago, was presented with the Medal of Bravery in Ottawa by Canada's Governor General Michelle Jean in February.

Barry Kessler, 60, of Pangman received the medal at Rideau Hall. He was among 41 Canadians honoured at the ceremony, the only Saskatchewan resident at the time.

Barry and his wife, Louise, almost didn't go to Ottawa. "We're both working and have to get time off. And we have cattle, and chores

to do. I really didn't think it was a very big deal."

"But it was definitely worth it," he says now.

"I have mixed feelings about the recognition but when I entered the Hall with all the other recipients and saw 150 people clapping, it felt good. I heard everyone's story and the amazing things they were being rewarded for doing. There wasn't a boring moment in the whole program."

Another highlight was supper in the Parliamentary restaurant, arranged by MP Ralph Goodale of Regina.

"There were things on the menu that we'll probably never see

again."

Barry says nothing in his 10 years with EMS or his 44 years as a volunteer fireman compares with the experience in 2004 when he pulled Tom Merritt from a burning tractor.

Tom's tractor was about half a mile away in a slough when he first saw the fire. As he got closer, he saw his neighbour slumped over in the tractor, unconscious, with flames and heavy smoke all around him.

"I knew what had to be done before I got off my tractor."

Barry knew the only way to get Tom out was going to be through the back window so he grabbed his hammer. He smashed out the window but then was faced with the difficulty of moving the man.

"He outweighed me by 100 pounds. "

My first thought was I'd never get him out. It was hard to even sit him up. But you do what you have to, to help a friend in need." Barry called 911 and struggled to get Tom out.

As he slid him down the back of the tractor, the windshield exploded.

"It was like a shotgun going off. It scared the hell out of me."

The next day, the first of an endless migraine began. By the next week, the pain was unbearable.

Barry began visiting doctors and trying different, costly medica-

town equipment operator for a year and a half before he could go back to work.

He couldn't farm.

Doctors could not tell him, definitively, if the migraines and high blood pressure were related to the rescue.

"I still don't have the stamina I used to have, although some people try to tell me it's just old age." Then he laughs.

While he was ill, Barry's friend Tom died from a brain tumor.

"That was tough for me," he says.

In spite of it all, Barry still recommends volunteer work.

"What happened to me is a rare thing. It's very rewarding to be a volunteer, to make a difference in someone's life.

"Anyone who does this work, especially in the fire department or for the ambulance, will say the same."

Barry says he can understand if some people think that what he did was beyond the call of duty.

"But if it was your friend or neighbour needing help, you'd know. You just do what you need to do."

There's an initial shot of fear. Then you focus."

The father of five admits it's been an emotional experience.

"Every once in a while, I get a little teary-eyed.

"I'm over most of it. But it's not something I'll ever forget," he says.