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Future of Uxbridge hospital's ER looks brighter

More services possible, Markham Stouffville says

BY JEFF HAYWARD
Metroland Staff

The pulse of Uxbridge's emergency room is growing stronger, according to a hospital official.

Neil Walker, chief operating officer of the Markham Stouffville Hospital Corporation, which oversees the Uxbridge Cottage Hospital, made the statement in a presentation to Uxbridge council.

He acknowledged the ER "has a vacancy of three physicians", but all ER shifts have been covered for September and October.

"The plan is to use locum (temporary) physicians," he said. "Not all shifts are covered (in November and December) but we're working to get them covered," said Mr. Walker.

The Uxbridge ER is popular with Whitchurch-Stouffville residents. For many, it's their closest hospital. Stouffville doctors sometimes refer patients to Uxbridge Cottage.

Dr. Jennifer Wilson, interim chief of staff, said following the meeting, "I'd say as of right now we probably have 80 per cent (of shifts) covered until the end of the year... things are looking positive to the end of December."

COLONOSCOPIES, FRACTURE CLINIC

Mr. Walker explained hundreds of doctors have been contacted regarding setting up practice in Uxbridge "and we are currently in communication with 18 physicians, with five very strong candidates."

A letter of offer has already been sent to one of them, he added.

He also confirmed hospital administration is looking to use the operating room in Uxbridge for day procedures.

Pat Shaw, vice-president of public relations for the hospital, said as early as this fall procedures such as colonoscopies and a fracture clinic will be offered at the Uxbridge site.

"Uxbridge hospital is alive and well," Mr. Walker said.

For more information on Markham Stouffville Hospital's service, including Uxbridge Cottage Hospital, go to msh.on.ca

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