

PRESS RELEASE

THE AYLMER HEALTH COOP IS AT A CROSSROADS

(Gatineau- December 15, 2009) - - - Founded only six years ago, the Aylmer Health Coop is recognized in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada as a model of community action. Since that time, the doctors, the staff of the clinic and more than 9500 members have joined their efforts to ensure the continuation of health services to the local population.

With only limited resources, the Coop has been able to establish a solid organizational base. Among its accomplishments, worth mentioning is the recruitment efforts that have resulted in increase of medical staff from four to nine doctors, despite the retirement of one of the founding doctors, the transformation of the clinic into a Family Medicine Group, the addition of two nurses, the improvement of the facilities that are open seven days a week and a walk-in service that handles more than 20,000 visits a year.

According to the president, Paul Simard, the Coop has permitted the citizens of the Aylmer sector to benefit from the health services that they would otherwise have lost and would have had to seek elsewhere. Today he said "We are victims of our own success as our lack of resources is impeding us from continuing to develop the services that our members and the population have come to expect."

It is in this context that the Board of Directors has taken a number of decisions that will not only stabilize the financial situation of the Coop, but also allow it to grow, without in any way altering the access to medical services for both the Coop members and non-members. The clinic is greatly in need of more spacious and better adapted premises and the members will be asked to pay an annual fee as do the members of other health coops. "*After months of study and consultation, we have reached the conclusion that we have no other choice if we are to ensure our survival and be able to grow*" said the President.

This source of revenue will allow the Coop to offer its members a larger and better facility that will be able to accommodate more doctors and patients, and could lead to the lifting of the moratorium on new memberships.

Mr. Simard emphasized that, even though the new fee will be an annual payment, it is also anticipated that it can be established at a lower rate after the financial situation is stabilized. The Coop will continue to gratefully accept the financial donations from individual citizens and volunteer organizations in the Aylmer area that have helped to improve the technical equipment used at the clinic.

Mr. Simard said “*The recruitment of new doctors remains our biggest challenge, and we are confident that the time and effort we devote to it will continue to produce results.*” The clinic on rue du Couvent welcomed two new doctors to the medical team this past September.

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Source : Paul Simard, President
Aylmer Health Coop