

**HEALTH: ANNAPOLIS COMMUN. HEALTH CTR.  
- UNCERTAINTY**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: My question is for the Minister of Health. Dr. Ross has been travelling from community to community across our province, causing uncertainty wherever he goes. Residents and staff of the Annapolis Community Health Centre have worked and continue to work diligently when it comes to the recruitment of physicians. The cloud of uncertainty, however, is causing anxiety amongst residents and is undoubtedly creating obstacles when it comes to the recruitment of physicians. Doctors are nervous about making commitments to work at the Annapolis Community Health Centre, and understandably so.

My question to the minister is, what guarantee will the minister make that Dr. John Ross will not abandon the Annapolis Community Health Centre like your government has abandoned the people of southwestern Nova Scotia?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, this government is very much committed to safe, accessible emergency health care services all over the Province of Nova Scotia, including in the Annapolis Valley, and we are very committed to the Annapolis Health Care Centre.

Dr. Ross will be reporting in an interim report relatively soon. I think if there is any uncertainty, this certainly will help people in that area realize the direction in which this government will be going. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, citizens are upset. When they become upset they look to their government to provide leadership, they look to their government for answers, yet they feel abandoned by the actions of this government. My question to the minister is, does the minister acknowledge the fact that the actions of Dr. John Ross are causing great anxiety in communities, especially since her government had already promised to keep all emergency rooms open 24/7 during the election campaign?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the honourable member and all citizens of Nova Scotia that this government is very much committed to ensuring that we have safe, accessible emergency health care services from one end of this province to the other. That is why we appointed a very well-respected emergency room physician to meet with people around the province, look at the information in terms of the patterns of use of emergency departments, and really develop a strong plan to fix the problems in our emergency health care system, and that's what we intend to do.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, they hired Dr. John Ross for one reason and that's to hide behind, so the Premier can break another promise that he made to the people of Nova Scotia during the election campaign. Dr. Ross came into Annapolis and did a hit and run -

he visited physicians, walked through the facility, but he failed to talk to the residents. This government has been invited to a number of public meetings to talk to the people of Annapolis Royal and surrounding area and it's been a no-show from this government. While it is easy for this government to boast about the attributes of the Annapolis Community Health Centre when it is convenient to do so, it has been clear that to date they're unwilling to stand up and defend it.

My question to the minister is, will the minister commit to the residents of Annapolis that a 24/7 emergency room department will be a service offered at the Annapolis Community Health Centre in the future? A simple yes or no will do - will you keep your word or not?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, our commitment to the people of this province, including the residents of Annapolis, is that there will be safe, accessible emergency care from one end of this province to the other. Our government is very committed to the Annapolis Valley health care centre, thank you.