

Health concerns on campus

Problems relating to staff and funding at UPEI health centre

By Suzanne Williams

Rumours have been circulating around campus hypothesizing that the full-time nurse in the health centre has been sent home. The original speculation held that she was laid off because of problems with the school's budget.

This has increased the students' fear surrounding the possibility of the health centre's absence next year.

The nurse has been sent home, but due to personal health reasons. Her physician has informed her that she may

return to work at the centre as early as January. Another nurse has been hired on a temporary basis to fill in until that time.

Yet there are still some problems with the health centre in terms of funding, and the matter is being examined thoroughly.

Sheila Dresen, the Dean of Nursing, believes that the centre should provide year-round service to students and faculty, as well as for touring groups who use the campus for programs during the summers.

Thoughts on possible alternative situations have ranged from the current doctor, Bobby Lund, setting up practice so that he could hire his own nurse and receptionist, to having the PEI allocate an additional billing number for recruiting a new doctor through another province.

An advertisement was sent out in the Medical Society newsletter on Wednesday, November 26, to entice Island physicians to partner with the university. This is an open opportunity for a doctor's idea on how service should be pro-

vided. Proposals have been requested for next year, and the deadline is Monday, January 5, 1998.

"The university is not out to close the health centre to students," said President Elizabeth Epperly, "but we are looking into alternatives to how it is currently funded."

There is also talk of hiring a doctor who had patients in the surrounding community and using the health centre for Holland College students as well as university students. This would save the university money.

The health centre is a very important service within the university, since there are so many out-of-province and international students. Many professors use the health centre more often than their family physician. The doctors in town are already overbooked, and if the health centre were to shut down, many students and faculty would be forced to turn elsewhere.

John Crossley, Vice President of Academic Support, commented, "the only other alternative is to have to strip down the health centre."



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