



Rising above challenges

Improvement pathways
at Vitalité Health Network

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY
Quarter ending December 2024

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Purpose

To foster the health of our patients and communities, today and tomorrow.

Through a collaborative, learning approach, we foster the health of our communities and ensure the best care for our patients. We are an innovative, forward-looking network where everyone's voice counts, and where patients and families come first.

Organizational values

Safety and respect above all

Humility and curiosity at the heart of a learning culture

Collaboration and mutual support that promote synergy

Integrity and accountability in all our actions



Rising above challenges

Message from the President and CEO

As this quarterly report stands at the crossroads between 2024 and 2025, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our health care workers for their dedication over the holidays. It's thanks to them that we've been able to maintain quality services during this festive period.

The last quarter was marked by efforts to improve patient flow and access to primary health care and by encouraging recruitment results.

The modernization of oncology care, the certification of laboratory services and the creation of a residency program in pharmacy practice are also worthy of note.

As mentioned in the previous report, we pursued our projects and initiatives on 90-day execution cycles, implementing concrete actions. These actions have been deployed and will be measured until targets are met.

As we embark on a new year, I wish us every success in our ongoing efforts to advance our health care network and drive innovation to foster the health of our patients and communities, today and tomorrow.



Message from the Chairman of the Board of Directors

As we step into 2025, it's the perfect time to step back and reflect on our achievements over the past year and the strides we've made in advancing our Network.

The Vitalité Health Network teams continue to demonstrate the strength of passionate, dedicated people working towards a common goal and the difference they can make. As a testament to these efforts, it is with pride and appreciation for our team that I can highlight the fact that Vitalité Health Network has been recognized as one of Canada's Top 40 Research Hospitals. This feat is possible thanks to the ongoing commitment of our health care workers and their drive to innovate.

With an aging population and a labour shortage, optimization of resources and innovation are essential. This work is performed closely with our communities and partners. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them sincerely for their invaluable collaboration.

I invite you to read the rest of this quarterly report, which describes the Network's achievements and progress over the past three months.

On behalf of Vitalité's Board of Directors, I would like to congratulate the Network's teams!



Major directions



Patient
experience



Employee
experience



Building closer ties
with communities

Strategic priorities



Improving access to
primary health care



Improving patient flow and
hospital performance

Improvement initiatives and projects

Patient experience

Improving patient flow and hospital performance and improving access to primary health care require a wide range of projects and initiatives that mobilize teams in the field and involve them in the search for solutions.



New local family health teams

The Network's strategy for improving access to primary health care is based on the creation of local family health teams.

This innovative model is based on patients being cared for by a multidisciplinary team, rather than by a single doctor. This approach makes it possible to delegate

certain tasks and set up a rapid response system for minor emergencies. The sharing of electronic medical records facilitates collaboration between different health care professionals and ensures continuous monitoring of patients throughout their care.

Key Results

Deployment of this model progressed in the final months of 2024, with six new teams signing up with the Network.

We now have 23 local family health teams fully operational.

A new milestone has been reached: the teams set up over the last few months have succeeded in integrating an additional 20,009 patients into their initial patient base of 95,366. They now care for a total of 115,375 patients.

The Network's long-term objective is to integrate 284,139 patients into its model.

LOCAL FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS



23 fully operational

6 new
(signed agreement)

PATIENTS



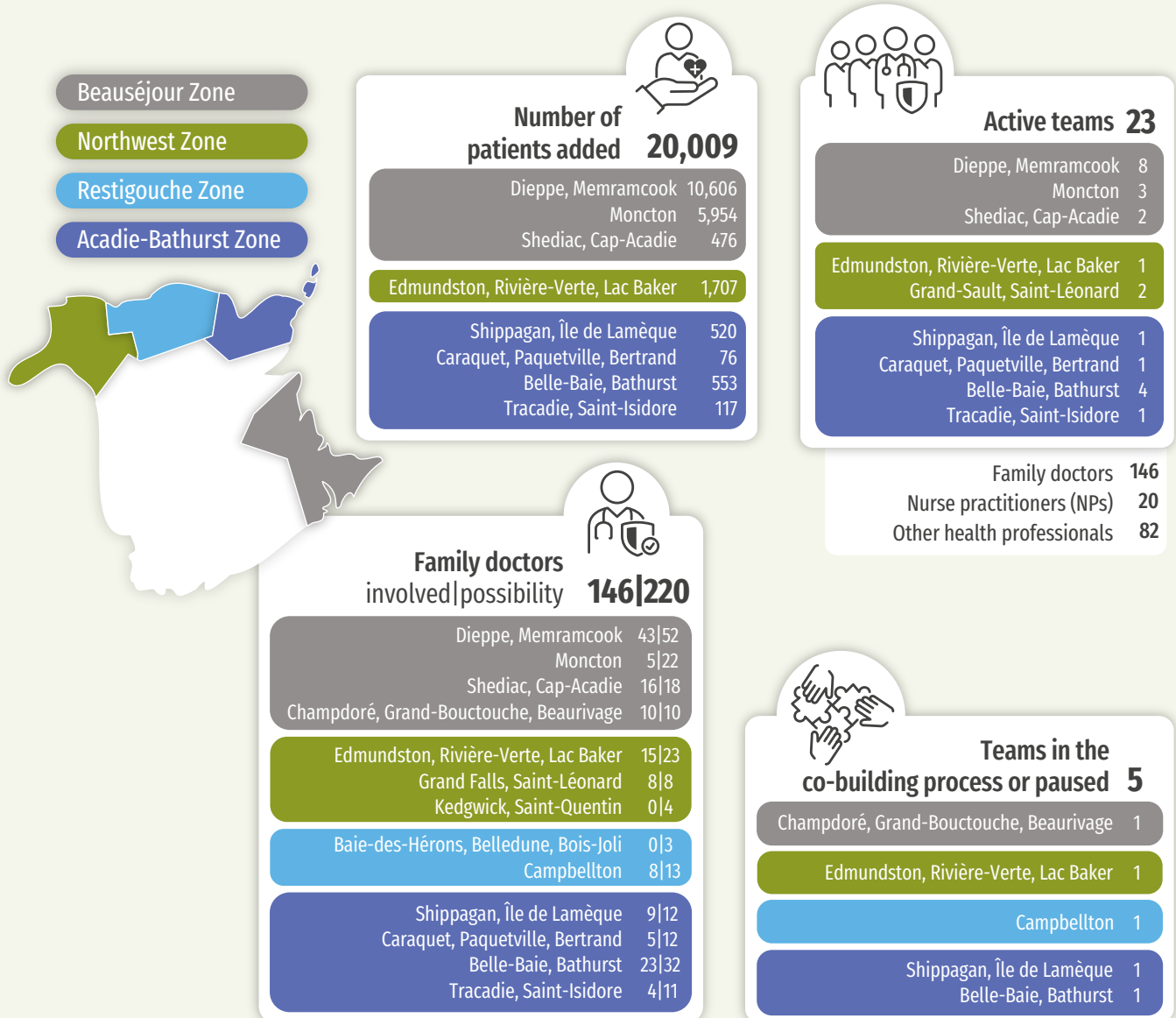
Initial patient base **95,366**

Additional patients **+20,009**

TOTAL 115,375

OBJECTIVE: 284,139

LOCAL FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS, BY REGION



THE NETWORK HAS SET ITSELF TWO IMPORTANT TARGETS FOR IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES

1. Offer regular appointments within five days for non-urgent consultations.

OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED BY 7 teams

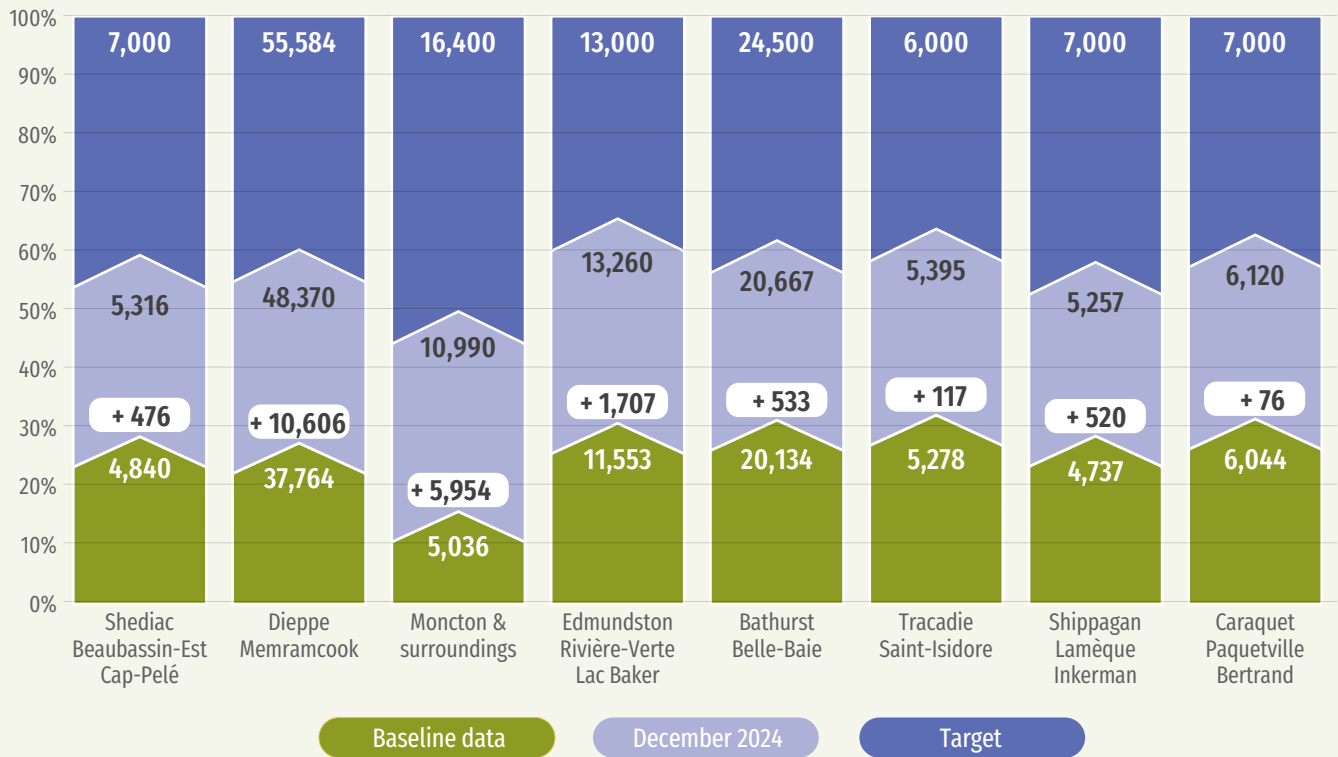
2. Offer appointments in less than 48 hours for minor emergencies, to guarantee rapid care for these situations.

OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED BY 13 teams

For the month of December 2024, seven local family health teams achieved the goal of offering regular appointments within five days.

In addition, thirteen teams are now able to respond to minor emergencies by offering appointments in less than 48 hours. Twelve of these are able to offer same-day appointments.

NUMBER OF PATIENTS CARED FOR BY ACTIVE TEAMS



Patient flow - Creating the command centre

The priority placed on improving patient flow and hospital performance is based on a clear vision: provide the right care, by the right care provider, at the right time and in the right place.

A new technological tool, the command centre, was therefore developed to facilitate the management of hospital activities, plan the coordination of care, anticipate the risks of overflow and react effectively.

This innovative system provides a real-time overview of operations in our facilities. It helps to proactively identify bottlenecks to target the most effective solutions and also to redistribute resources (human and material) to respond rapidly to needs and support patient departures.



Thanks to continuously updated data, this command centre makes the following possible:

- Precise monitoring of hospital and unit occupancy rates;
- Continuous monitoring of admission volumes, wait times and reasons for delays;
- A better overview of resource and bed availability, as well as planned patient departures;
- Informed decision making through automated data, such as wait times and completed and uncompleted tasks for each patient.

The Dr. Léon-Richard Oncology Centre equips itself with new tools to fight cancer

Cancer patients now benefit from more precise radiation therapy treatments thanks to the replacement of four linear accelerators at the Dr. Léon-Richard Oncology Centre.

These latest-generation devices target tumours with greater precision, while minimizing the effects on surrounding tissue. What's more, their installation expands the centre's radiosurgery capabilities, making it possible to treat more complex cases and offer patients new treatment options.

Radiotherapy services serve patients in the North and Southeast and include an Atlantic component, with specialized services such as brachytherapy for prostate cancer. Brachytherapy services for cervical cancer are also available.

The fourth accelerator is set to be operational by February 2025, marking the conclusion of this extensive project that began in 2022.



A program to combat antimicrobial resistance

The suboptimal use of antimicrobials contributes to the emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a public health crisis responsible for 1.27 to 4.95 million deaths worldwide each year. Without intervention, antimicrobial resistance could cause more deaths than cancer and diabetes combined by 2050.

In response to this threat, a new antimicrobial stewardship program has been set up within the Network.

The program relies on three clinical pharmacists who collaborate with microbiologist-infectious disease specialists to help attending teams optimize antimicrobial use, develop practical tools such as treatment guidelines, and support clinicians in their therapeutic choices.

So far, the program's pharmacists have been working with prescribers in the Beauséjour and Restigouche zones. Deployment will gradually be extended to the Acadie-Bathurst and Northwest zones, as new clinical pharmacists join the team.



Laboratory services certified to the highest international standards

Vitalité Health Network's laboratory services have earned Accreditation Canada's prestigious ISO 15189 Plus certification, a globally recognized mark of excellence.

This certification attests to the quality, precision and rigour of the analyses carried out by our laboratories, which play a crucial role in the operation of essential services. Assessed according to a rigorous standards book comprising over 950 requirements and an

extensive survey of services, this distinction guarantees compliance with the highest international standards.

This recognition reflects the Network's commitment to excellence in all aspects of diagnostic care, drawing on cutting-edge technology and the expertise of its teams to provide safe services and support clinicians in their decision making.

In addition, the Network's four regional hospitals also received certification for Using Labs Wisely as part of the Choosing Wisely campaign.

This national collaborative project aims to reduce the number of low-value laboratory tests that strain hospital resources and sometimes expose patients to unwarranted investigations and treatments. This initiative guides our teams in optimizing investigations and treatments according to best practices.



Patient testimonial

Since June 2024, patients undergoing colorectal surgery at the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre, the Chaleur Regional Hospital or the Edmundston Regional Hospital have had access to the SeamlessMD digital care journey platform. This platform allows patients to consult their care plan directly on their smartphone, tablet or computer and receive clear, tailored step-by-step instructions through reminders, educational content, progress tracking and symptom monitoring.

"Thank you for supporting me during my recovery. The questionnaire is a bit like having a coach at home. It was particularly helpful at the very beginning, when I returned home after surgery."

- **Mona Landry**, Beauséjour Zone, patient of Dr. Jocelyne Hébert.

The platform will be deployed in the first quarter of 2025 for gynecologic oncology and hepatobiliary surgery procedures in the Beauséjour Zone. Its implementation will then continue for hip and knee replacement surgeries in all zones over the course of the year.

Employee experience

In addition to recruitment initiatives, retention initiatives are also being implemented to improve employee work attendance, engagement and satisfaction. We want to provide health care workers with a healthy, engaging and safe work environment, which ultimately contributes to our ability to deliver quality patient care.



Launch of the 2nd edition of the employee experience survey

Last June, Vitalité Health Network launched the first edition of its new health care worker survey, as part of its efforts to improve the employee experience. This survey aims to strengthen engagement and improve working conditions within the Network. A new key indicator from the survey, the employee net promoter score, help us to better assess the quality of the workplace experience and to guide managers in implementing concrete actions to foster a more positive and stimulating work environment.

In the first quarter, the net promoter score was -15.5 (the Canadian benchmark in the health care sector is -6.5). In the second quarter, the rate improved slightly to -15.

This survey is designed to gather employees' impressions and suggestions in complete confidentiality. The data collected will be used to guide the Network's continuous improvement strategies. With this initiative, Vitalité Health Network reaffirms its commitment to prioritizing the employee experience as a strategic direction, convinced that this is essential to fulfilling its purpose and ensuring the quality of services provided.



Recruitment and hiring

Recruitment and hiring initiatives

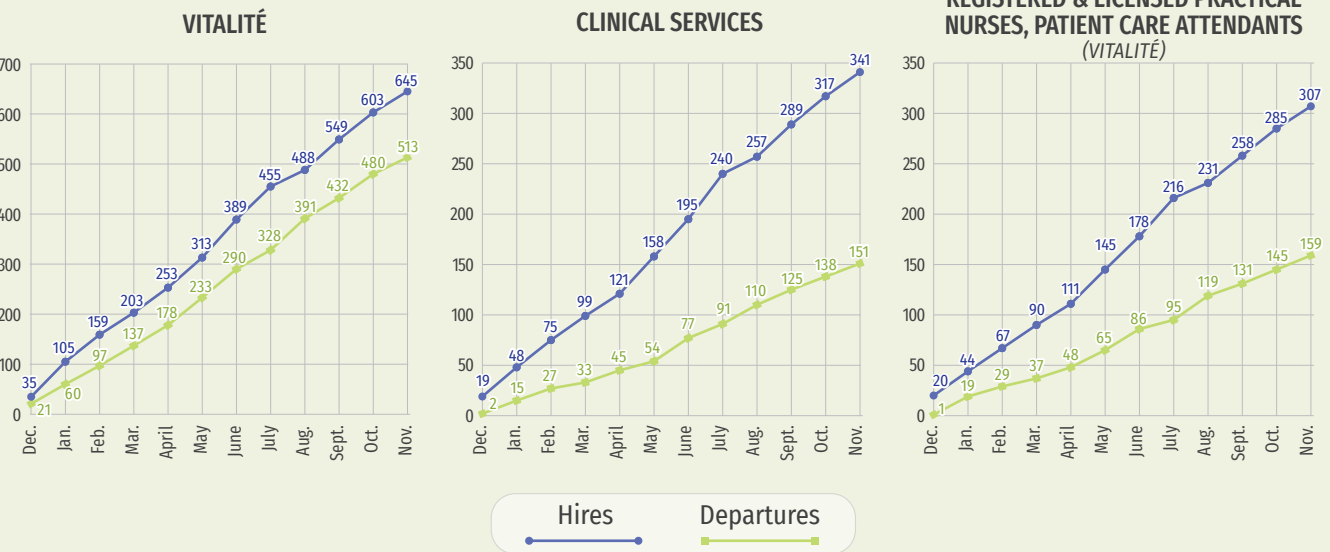
- Faster mobilization of known potential candidates
 - Residential and community immigration and settlement support
 - Financial incentives
- Improving the student employee experience
 - Improving access to recruitment information and data
 - Improving planning of recruitment events

Key Results

From April 1 to November 30, 2024	Number of graduate hires*	Number of international hires*1	International offers for which a response is pending	Other hires*
Registered nurses	111	76	41	37
Licensed practical nurses	83	-	-	28
Patient care attendants	15	-	-	23
TOTAL	209	76	41	88

* Accepted offers | 1. Will start as patient care attendants until registered in N.B.

NUMBER OF NEW HIRES AND DEPARTURES AT THE NETWORK



Improved attendance management and fewer workplace accidents

Vitalité Health Network continues to implement the project to improve attendance management, which aims to ensure more active management of frequent absenteeism and better supervision of employees by the disability management team. These efforts are closely linked to those being made to improve the employee experience, patient experience and hospital performance.

The annual average of paid sick leave days per Network employee was 10.3 in the second quarter of 2024–2025,

compared with 11.7 in the second quarter of 2023–2024, a reduction of 12% and a reduction of 27% compared with 2022–2023. The Network has set itself the goal of achieving an annual average of 10 days of paid sick leave per employee by the end of 2025–2026.

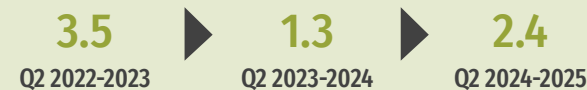
At the same time, efforts to improve workplace safety are continuing. In the second quarter of 2024–2025, the annual lost-time accident rate stood at 2.4 accidents per 100 employees, which is even better than the target of 3.5, demonstrating progress in employee protection.

Key results

AVERAGE ANNUAL PAID SICK LEAVE per employee



ANNUAL WORK ACCIDENT RATE per 100 health care workers



FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS (FTEs) LOST	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	Difference since 2021-2022	
Due to work accidents	63	55	*49	-14 FTEs	-22%
Due to sick leave	341	289	*253	-88 FTEs	-26%
Total	404	344	*302	-102 FTEs	-25%

Training the next generation: a success story in intensive care

Faced with a high vacancy rate in intensive care units, Vitalité Health Network reviewed its practices for recruiting and training the next generation of nurses in this sector.

Intensive care now welcomes nursing students as part of their preceptorship. A modified orientation program was designed, including adapted critical care courses and a new placement program developed in partnership with the Université de Moncton.

Students benefit from support that fosters their integration and transition into the professional environment.

This includes:

- Tailored orientation;
- Personalized support;
- A clear definition of the tasks that can be carried out without supervision;
- A job offer at the end of the placement.



Thanks to these initiatives, more than 22 young nurses have been recruited, making it possible to fill the vast majority of vacancies in intensive care.

Strengthening our medical teams: a focused and human-centred commitment

In 2024, 45 physicians joined the Network, while 15 left.

These positive results reflect sustained efforts to meet medical staff needs, thanks to strategic planning that takes into account the specific features of each zone and priority specialties.

A multitude of initiatives have been implemented to forge strong links with local and national learners, in collaboration with the Centre de formation médicale du Nouveau-Brunswick and other medical schools across the country.

Activities such as networking events, informal get-togethers, graduate celebrations, presentations, mentoring, and summer shadowing and research placements (60 students hosted last summer) have helped attract and retain future physicians.

Participation in career fairs and professional association meetings across the country has helped promote the enriching opportunities offered by practice within the Network and in our communities.

In partnership with the regional service commissions, special events and exploratory visits were organized to highlight the assets of each region and facilitate the integration of physicians and their families.



New residency program in pharmacy practice

Since September 2024, the Network has been hosting two residents in a new residency program in pharmacy practice. This program provides them with the opportunity to develop advanced skills in hospital pharmacy while benefiting from a \$50,000 scholarship.

This is the first French-language residency program in pharmacy practice to be offered outside Quebec. The initiative reflects the Network's commitment to training and recruiting future talent to support its clinical teams and deliver optimal patient care.

As the complexity of medications increase, the role of pharmacists is more essential than ever to ensure the quality and safety of care, reduce medication errors and cut drug-related costs.



Chloé Richard and Roxanne Couture are the first residents in the new residency program.



Other projects underway

- Review of the performance appraisal process
- Improving recognition practices and culture in the field
- Improvement of the return-to-work accommodation process

“What I like most about working at the Stella-Maris-de-Kent Hospital is that we're a great team who help each other out every day. I love waking up in the morning and coming to see my patients. That's what matters most to me, just like helping people. I'm very proud to have chosen Vitalité.”

- **Mark Savoie**, patient care attendant at Stella-Maris-de-Kent Hospital



Building closer ties with communities

Optimizing the health care system depends on the engagement of all stakeholders, including health partners, the education sector and communities. Aware of the need for synergy, Vitalité Health Network continues to invest in its relationships, both internally (with its teams on the ground) and externally.



Community Health Needs Assessment

Vitalité Health Network has been very active in recent months in building closer ties with communities and assessing their health needs.

A health needs assessment is currently underway in the Chaleur region, more specifically in Bathurst and the surrounding area, as is a second one in the Edmundston area. Between October and December 2024, the assessment team analyzed and began drafting

the report for Bathurst after numerous meetings with local stakeholders. The results will be shared with the community in May 2025. At the same time, recruitment for the Edmundston Community Advisory Committee began, with the first meetings aimed at mobilizing community representatives and initiating collective reflection on priority health needs.

“Participating in the health needs assessment was an eye-opener! I've found that many of the needs expressed by the community are universal, affecting all ages, abilities and social groups. Although our region is rich in opportunities, access remains difficult for many due to its rural nature. This committee represents a real opportunity for people to develop solutions to these challenges.”

- **Dianne Cormier-Northrup**, committed citizen



New impetus to support young people in the Chaleur region

A project symbolizing the collective effort to offer young people a healthier future and reduce the long-term impact of substance use has also been launched in the Chaleur region. Initiated in June 2023 by Public Health, this initiative aims to strengthen collaboration to prevent substance use among young people. It led to the creation of a dedicated local committee. From the outset, the committee has sought to fund the implementation of the Icelandic Planet Youth model, recognized for its effectiveness. In October 2024, a key moment was reached with the official signing of the contract with Planet Youth, marking the launch of this ambitious project, coordinated by Public Health employees and supported by the Chaleur Regional Service Commission. Above all, this project depends on community participation and engagement.

Shannon Lavigne, Guidance Counsellor, Education Support Services, Anglophone North School District, and committee member says: *“The focus of Planet Youth is not only on drug addiction, but also on creating a climate of trust and belonging for young people, fostering their integration and safety. It helps them make better decisions, and our team is committed to their overall health.”*

Finally, the engagement team continued its outreach work by facilitating numerous meetings between Vitalité Health Network stakeholders and various external partners, including the Réseau d'immigration francophone, the Association francophone des aînés du Nouveau-Brunswick and the Société Santé et Mieux-être en français du Nouveau-Brunswick, to name but a few.

Reflecting on community development in the Southeast

A gathering, organized by and for community development advisors from Vitalité Health Network and Horizon Health Network, was held in November 2024 in southeastern New Brunswick. This event, rich in interactions, aimed to forge connections among various partners essential for community development, including the Southeast Regional Service Commission, District scolaire francophone Sud, Anglophone East

School District, Primary Health Care (Vitalité and Horizon), Population Health (Horizon), the Community Resilience and Capacity Branch, as well as the Departments of Social Development and Environment. The discussions, under the theme "Developing collaborative work plans to advance community development," brought together over 45 participants.

Other news

Documentary series showcases future health care professionals

A new documentary series, *Bientôt dans nos hôpitaux* [Coming soon to our hospitals], offers a captivating look at the careers of medical and nursing students in New Brunswick.

Directed by Julien Cadieux, this series explores their training, the challenges they face and their deep-rooted motivation to contribute to the health care system, painting a portrait of a generation ready to take over with resilience and humanity. All five episodes are now available on Tou.TV.



Vitalité ranks in top 40 research hospitals

Vitalité Health Network is one of only three organizations in the Atlantic provinces to be ranked among Canada's Top 40 Research Hospitals.

This recognition reflects a commitment to innovation and continuous improvement in health care and medical knowledge.

In 2023-2024, the Network's Research and Health Evaluation sector contributed to 21 academic research projects and 33 therapeutic clinical trials.

Recognition for crisis response teams

Vitalité Health Network received a Certificate of Recognition from the Crime Prevention Association of New Brunswick for its role in the creation of the Mobile Addiction and Mental Health Crisis Response Teams.

Created in January 2021 in partnership with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Department of Health and other police departments, these teams provide on-site assessment, rapid crisis de-escalation and effective referral to community resources. These coordinated interventions help reduce emergency room visits, hospitalizations and police arrests.



Discover Vitalité Wellness Break

The Network presents its new podcast, Vitalité Wellness Break. Each episode features thought-provoking discussions with local experts on issues that matter to you.

To listen to it, visit our YouTube page or the main podcast platforms.

Health care workers and volunteers, the driving force behind the Network

2024 Celebration of Medicine award winners

The New Brunswick Medical Society (NBMS) honoured the recipients of its 2024 Celebration of Medicine awards at an event held in Miramichi on October 5, 2024.

The winners include physicians, residents and students who have made a positive contribution to patient care and to our profession.

Vitalité Health Network congratulates its winners:

- **Dr. Carole Clavette**, Saint-Jacques - Dr. Edouard Hendriks Rural Community Physician Award
- **Dr. Paul Cloutier**, Edmundston - CMA Honorary Membership
- **Dr. Patrick Marcotte**, Moncton - Humanitarian Award
- **Dr. Jocelyne Martin**, Moncton - Iype/Wilfred Resident Award

Mural celebrating 100 years of French-language health services unveiled

In November 2024, the organizing committee for the 100th anniversary celebrations of French-language health services in Moncton unveiled the 100th anniversary mural, a work by artist Yvon Gallant, permanently installed on the outside of the Dr. Daniel-de-Yturalde Pavilion of the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre.

This mural pays tribute to the people, partners and health care workers who have contributed to the advancement of French-language health care and services in the region.



50 years of compassion with the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont UHC Volunteer Association

On November 20, 1974, a dozen determined women laid the foundations for a great adventure. Their mission: to organize Santa's visit to the hospital, despite a non-existent budget. And so the Volunteer Association was born.

Since then, their mission has remained unchanged: to support medical, nursing and spiritual care for the

comfort and well-being of patients. Every year, hundreds of volunteers join the Association to make a difference, carrying on the legacy of these pioneering women.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to 50 years of compassion and dedication.



Openness and transparency, to serve you better

Follow our progress




See the Performance Report

- The report is published on the Network's website and updated on a quarterly basis.

For each key indicator, the report provides the:

- Benchmark (national or international figure for the same indicators);
- Network's target for the current quarter;
- Results for the current quarter;
- Trend over recent quarters.

The colour code shows progress made:

-  Green – exceeds target
-  Yellow – meets target (+/- 5%)
-  Red – below target

The items measured are chosen based on the improvements to be made. It is normal to see yellow and red, which indicates a gap between the current performance and desired performance.



[Vitalité performance indicators \(vitalitenb.ca\)](https://vitalitenb.ca)

Participate in the public meeting of the Board of Directors

Join us, online or in person, at the Board of Directors' public meeting on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 1:30 p.m., at Danny's Hotel & Suites, located at 1223 Principale Street, Beresford.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. France Desrosiers, President and CEO of Vitalité Health Network, and Thomas Soucy, Chairman of the Board, will answer questions from the public about the quarterly report, the public meeting of the Board and other Network initiatives.

The hyperlink to participate in the virtual meeting will be posted on social media and on the Vitalité Health Network website, under the Board of Directors tab and the Meetings sub-tab.

bit.ly/vitalitenb-board



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