



# Rising above challenges

Improvement pathways  
at Vitalité Health Network



QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY  
JUNE 2024

# Table of contents

Purpose and organizational values.....	2
Message from the President and CEO and the Chairman of the Board of Directors .....	3
Major directions and strategic priorities .....	4
Improvement initiatives and projects	
• Patient experience .....	4
• Employee experience .....	9
• Building closer ties with communities.....	12
Health care workers and volunteers, the driving force behind the Network .....	14
Openness and transparency, to serve you better .....	16

## Our 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.*

## Our 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

In a spirit of transparency and accountability, Vitalité Health Network publishes a *Report to the Community* four times a year outlining the progress we are making in efficiency and process improvement to serve the public better.

These quarterly reports are accompanied by Performance Reports posted on the Network's website illustrating our overall results in greater detail. The data for these reports originate from the various improvement projects and initiatives underway across the Network.

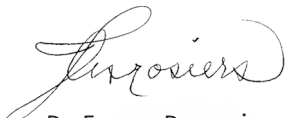
I invite you to read this report covering the last quarter, from April to June 2024. It presents the paths we are taking to support the transformation of our health care system. These are aligned with our three major directions, namely **employee experience**, **patient experience** and **building closer ties with communities**.

This report includes an update on the deployment of local family health teams and the patient flow optimization project. It also looks at the quarter's results in the areas of recruitment and retention, which are key to the performance of hospitals and the entire system.

Our ability to transform the system to better meet the needs of patients and communities depends largely on one precious resource – our health care workers.

Therefore, on my own behalf and that of my management colleagues, I would like to thank our health care workers and to reiterate how important they are. I would also like to thank our health care partners, our volunteers and our communities, who are also playing a key role in this great societal project.

Happy reading!



Dr. France Desrosiers  
President and CEO



## Message from the Chairman of the Board of Directors

The release of this month's Quarterly Report coincides with the release of Vitalité Health Network's Annual Report. These two publications are also coming out as the members of our Board of Directors complete the first year of their term.

These are sound reviews of the past quarter and year and contain concrete results and evidence that Vitalité Health Network's teams are dynamic, committed, and hard at work improving the delivery of care and services.

The Network has identified a clear direction and solid trajectories to achieve the organization's goals using data, projections and continuous learning-based strategic planning to rise above challenges.

I hasten to add, however, that the hard work underway is being carried out under challenging circumstances as we grapple with an aging population, increasing chronic illness, and a labour shortage.




For the past year, I have had a front row seat on the Network's unwavering efforts and the determination of our teams. I invite communities to get involved in the transformation of the health care system and to reaffirm their support for Vitalité Health Network, which deserves our unqualified admiration.





M. Thomas Soucy  
Chairman of the  
Board of Directors



## 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.

### Creation of new local family health teams



At the heart of the Network's strategy to improve access to primary health care lies the creation of local family health teams.

Every team is connected to their own referral group responsible for quickly guiding patients to the right service provider. The objective is to provide access to service within five days along with enhanced follow-up by developing an interconnected system.

Implementation of the model continues apace, with collaboration meetings taking place in all the Network's regions.

Some 12 local family health teams are now in operation and 14 teams are in the process of being created.

In Moncton, the new Connexion Health Centre has joined the Network's model, and its multidisciplinary team has alone already been able to accept 2,844 orphan patients.

### Vitalité Health Network model



Four of the five teams that set up a service for minor emergencies were able to maintain an average access time of less than 24 hours.

In all, the teams created in recent months have been able to add 11,778 orphan patients to their initial patient base of 48,862.

Our teams also worked on deploying the Vitrai artificial intelligence platform, which is designed to help connect patients with the most appropriate health care provider.



## Key Results

New patients being cared for	11,778
Average wait time for patients in the model	From 12 to 8 days
Physicians involved in building the model	153 out of 216 (58%)
Nurse practitioners involved	17
Other health professionals involved	45

Community	Teams in the co-building process	Active teams	Care providers involved	
			PHYSICIANS	NURSE PRACTITIONERS
Edmundston Haut-Madawaska	2	1	17	1
Dieppe	7	4	40	-
Memramcook	1	1	3	-
Moncton	3	2	6	7
Cocagne   Cap-Pelé	1	1	4	-
Lamèque	1	1	5	2.6
Shippagan	1	-	4	-
Caraquet	1	-	5	-
Bathurst	4	2	24	2
Bouctouche Richibucto	1	-	11	-
Tracadie	1	-	3	-
Grand Falls	1	-	8	3
Shediac	1	-	15	1
Campbellton	1	-	8	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>17</b>

## Working to improve patient flow

Network teams have been working to advance the organization's other top strategic priority, namely optimizing patient flow and hospital performance.

A major project is underway to ensure that a bed is immediately available for every patient requiring acute care and that patients can be cared for on the right unit, by the right people, and at the right time.

To improve the performance of our services, we need to facilitate every stage in a patient's care journey, from consultation to admission through to discharge. Supported by solutions developed by our teams in the field, these efforts are designed to reduce hospital occupancy rates as well as the waiting times for emergency, examination and surgical services.

In recent weeks, we have strengthened our discharge planning teams and a discharge planning process has been introduced in the Network's four zones to help patients return home as quickly as possible while continuing to receive quality care.

A patient tracking tool has been developed to provide real time snapshots of bed requirements and patient status. The objective here is to orchestrate care plans more efficiently and to maximize the use of our resources.

Deployment of the project began on the Medical Unit (4C) of the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre, the Medical and Surgical Unit of the Campbellton Regional Hospital, and the Surgical Units of the Chaleur Regional Hospital and Edmundston Regional Hospital.

The creation of geriatric health clinics and the establishment of child psychiatry standards – two projects outlined below – are further examples of initiatives directly impacting patient flow.



## Child Psychiatry Program standards



Network teams have been working to standardize practices within the child psychiatry departments and units of our four regional hospitals.

Based on recommendations of Canadian and international organizations, child psychiatry program norms were used to set standards in the areas of admission and discharge, mental status and risk assessment, trauma-informed care planning, inpatient and team safety, and more.

The introduction of these standards, which began in the Beauséjour Zone, is designed to support the involvement of community and family partners in discharge planning as of admission and to facilitate the transition back to the community, thereby helping to improve the pathway for young patients. These standards also support the development of a trauma-focused approach and of safe care for patients and health professionals alike.



### Key Result

► **Reduction in AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY**  
from 12.9 days to 9.8 days.

Beauséjour Zone,  
from December 2023 to April 2024

## The Healthy Aging Clinic, a new service for the senior clientele



A new Healthy Aging Clinic opened in Dieppe in June. This facility offers a range of assessment and rehabilitation services for people aged 65 and over to facilitate their access to care.

The clinic's multidisciplinary team, which includes doctors, nurses, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, a speech-language pathologist and a social worker, helps clients maintain their independence and quality of life at home.

This new service, which will help prevent hospitalizations and accelerate certain discharges, is one of several

initiatives aimed at improving patient flow and hospital performance.

The Network intends to replicate this model in each of its four zones.

Geriatric medical assessment clinics have already been set up at the Enfant-Jésus RHSJt Hospital in Caraquet and the Campbellton Regional Hospital. Rehabilitation services (physiotherapy, occupational therapy and social work) will be added in a second phase of implementation.



## A new partnership for cataract surgery



A new partnership between Vitalité Health Network and an Edmundston ophthalmology clinic will greatly improve access to cataract surgery in the Northwest.

An agreement with the clinic operated by Drs. Nadia Lihimdi and Aissa Iggui will triple the number of surgeries performed each week. And performing these procedures outside a hospital setting will significantly reduce delays for patients.

This was demonstrated by a similar partnership developed with the Acadie-Bathurst Ophthalmology Centre, which eliminated the list of patients waiting for cataract surgery for over one year.



### Key Results

- ▶ The number of patients **waiting for cataract surgery** dropped from 1,465 to **248**.

Acadie-Bathurst Zone, from September 2022 to May 2024

- ▶ **No patient has been waiting for more than one year.**

## Single-session therapy proves its worth



The single-session therapy program provides rapid access to mental health and addiction support.

Therapeutic intervention is now carried out at first contact – either in person, by videoconference or by telephone – so that users and their loved ones receive help when they need it most.

This early intervention model was initially implemented in all of the Network's community mental health and addiction service centres in the fall of 2021, then in the 15 teams providing services to children and youth in April 2022.

The initiative has significantly reduced waiting lists and accelerated access to services, both of which are essential to risk reduction and suicide prevention.



### Key Results

- ▶ **Median waiting time for access to:**

- ◆ adult services dropped from 22.25 days to **7.5 days**
- ◆ child and youth services dropped from 15.25 days to **7 days**

- ▶ **Single-session therapies provided in 2023–2024:**

- ◆ adult clients: **6,545**
- ◆ child and youth clients: **1,352**

## VIDEO ADD-ON



### Patient Experience Partner Program

Patient partners play an essential role in improving the quality of care and services.

As partners in the patient experience, they have the opportunity to share their experience and perspectives with staff and management advisory committees to help identify the public's needs.

Janice LeBlanc, one of these patient voices, describes her role and her reasons for joining the program.



## Choosing Wisely... to support our laboratories



The Network continues to play an active role in the national Choosing Wisely campaign, which aims to optimize investigations and treatments based on best practices and to improve the quality of medical care.

The Edmundston Regional Hospital, Campbellton Regional Hospital, Chaleur Regional Hospital and Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre are now participating with other health care facilities across the country in the joint Using Labs Wisely project. This national consortium is striving to reduce the number of low-value laboratory tests that waste hospital resources and sometimes force patients to undergo unnecessary tests and treatments.

Our four regional hospitals have worked to implement best practices designed to:

- Prevent unnecessary tests;
- Avoid repeating tests at a frequency unsupported by evidence;
- Prevent systematic prescribing protocols that contribute to over-utilization of tests;
- Avoid collecting blood samples before specific tests have been prescribed.





# Employee experience

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

## Improving attendance management and reducing work accidents

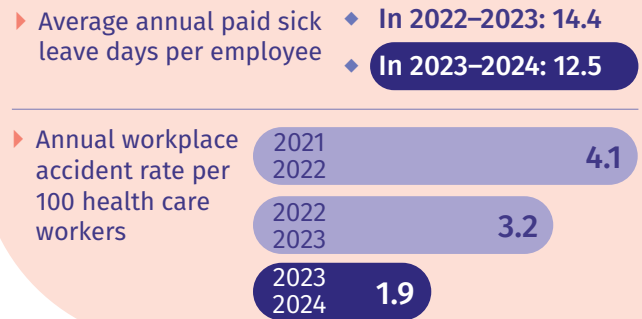
Vitalité Health Network is continuing to implement its project to improve attendance management, which is designed to provide more active management of frequent absenteeism and better supervision of employees by the disability management team. These efforts are closely related to other efforts underway to make improvements in employee experience, patient experience and hospital performance.

The average annual paid sick leave days per employee in the Network was 12.5 in 2023–2024 compared to 14.4 in 2022–2023, i.e. a reduction of 13.2%. The Network is targeting an annual average of 10 paid sick leave days per employee by the end of 2025–2026.

Employee safety in the workplace also improved during the year. The annual lost-time accident rate was

1.9 accidents per 100 workers, compared to 3.2 in 2022–2023 and 4.1 in 2021–2022.

### Key Results



## Employee engagement

The Network launched a new quarterly survey in June to improve the frequency and quality of the organization’s evaluation of employee engagement. A new tool (the employee net promoter score) will be administered



every quarter. It will provide a better understanding of the employee experience in the workplace and empower managers in working with their teams to make improvements promoting engagement.

## Staff rest cabins

Since February 2024, the employees at the Edmundston Regional Hospital, Restigouche Hospital Centre and Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre have been able to enjoy new rest cabins. Equipped with a vibrating massage chair, a soothing sound environment and a light therapy system, these cabins provide a truly relaxing experience. Some 3,517 employees have enjoyed a 25-minute session in one of these cabins, which will also soon be available at the Campbellton

Regional Hospital, Chaleur Regional Hospital and Tracadie Hospital.



## Recruitment and hiring (nursing)



The talent acquisition team meets daily to accelerate hiring in nursing and other critical health care professions. These meetings help set recruitment priorities and ensure that efforts are always aligned with the organization's needs.

### International recruitment

Network representatives attended job fairs in Morocco, France and Belgium in the fourth quarter of 2023–2024. Nearly 200 potential hires were identified at these events, and the recruitment team is working to confirm these hires. Additional missions are planned for Morocco, France, Belgium and Tunisia in 2024.

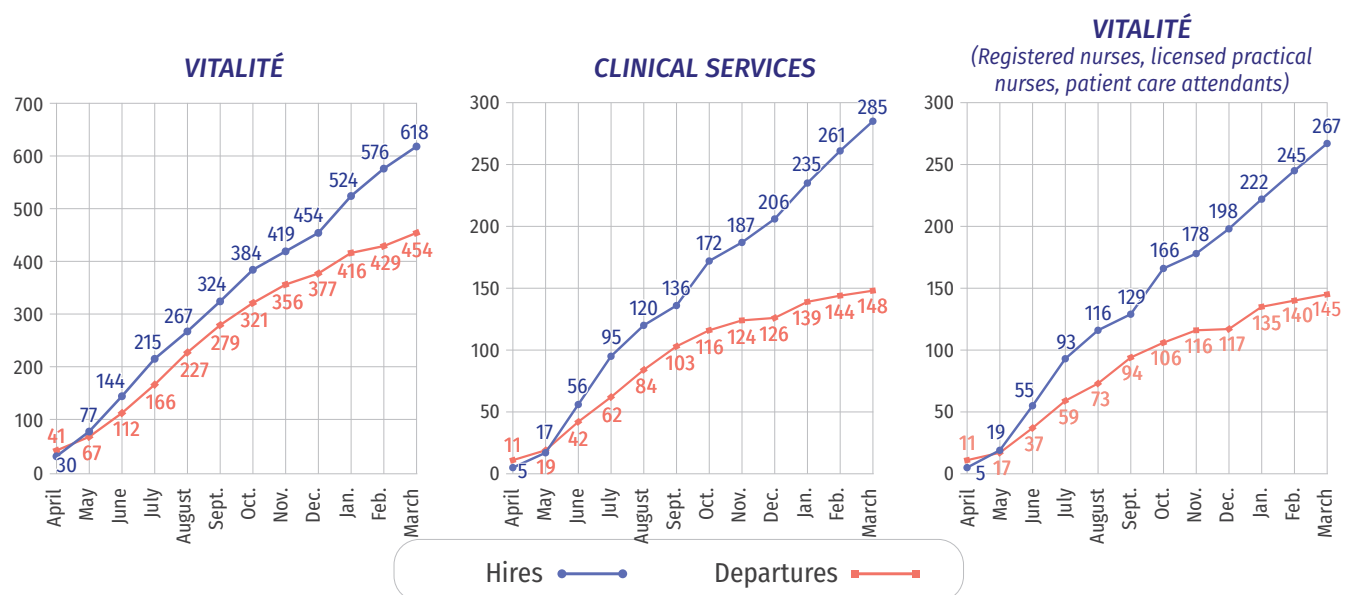
### Recruitment and hiring initiatives

- Faster mobilization of known potential candidates
- Support with immigration and residential and community settlement
- Financial incentives
- Improving the experience of student employees
- Improving access to recruitment information and data
- Improving recruitment event planning

## Key Results

From April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024	Number of graduates hired*	Number of international hires*	International offers for which a response is pending	Other hires*
Registered nurses	95	166**	42	63
Licensed practical nurses	49			28
Patient care attendants	57			34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>125</b>

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



For the second year in a row, the number of new hires at the Network has exceeded departures.



## Training and continuing education for business partners in informal conflict management



Our Conflict Management and Resolution Unit, whose services are directly related to employee retention, offers a mediation service to employees experiencing conflict situations. This approach has been a resounding success, with over 25 cases handled in the past year.

We have observed an improvement in the work climate. Training our human resources business partners in conflict management will improve our turnaround times, meet needs more quickly, and enhance the employee experience.

## Other projects underway

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

### **Rolando Rivillas is a practical nurse in the Surgical Suite at the Edmundston Regional Hospital.**

Rolando came from Colombia in 2021 to take the licensed practical nursing program at the Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick in Edmundston.

An employee of Vitalité Health Network since 2022, Rolando brings with him a wealth of experience acquired during nine years of work as a surgical suite nurse in his homeland. Spanish is his mother tongue and he decided to learn French to immigrate to Canada.

Rolando says he feels fortunate to be part of a team in which he feels welcomed, involved and valued.



# Building closer ties with communities

Optimizing the health care system depends on the commitment 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.

## Relations with First Nations

Since April 2024, the Network has been very active in its community outreach activities. First and foremost, dialogue has been established between the Network and First Nations communities to work toward a better future. The Public Health sector, in collaboration with the Engagement sector, held meetings with the health centre directors in all First Nations communities. Following a number of preparatory meetings among the various representatives, a face-to-face event took place in the Bouctouche region on April 30, 2024. After discussing best practices and health initiatives in First Nations' communities and attending presentations on some of the services offered by various Network departments, the participants discussed the steps to be taken to strengthen relations between the two parties and better identify and meet the health needs of the communities in question.



The photo shows Natasha Sock, Acting Director of the Elsipogtog Health Centre, and Dr. Desrosiers, President and CEO of Vitalité Health Network.

## Community health needs assessment

Recent months have also seen us launch the [Community Health Needs Assessment: Dalhousie, Balmoral, Belledune](#). This report, which was presented to the community at Dalhousie City Hall on April 25, 2024, contains the results of the community's efforts to identify its health priorities, namely promotion of healthy lifestyle habits, reduction of socioeconomic vulnerability, access to essential services (housing, transportation and childcare), access to health services, improvement of mental health, and reduction of substance use.



## Learning communities

On the learning communities front, the Network held a training session on asset-based community development. This training involved teams from Public Health, Primary Health Care, Performance, and Engagement. In addition, the executive directors of the regional service commissions and their community developers were invited to participate in the training and to initiate a collective dialogue on the implementation of learning communities.

The discussions highlighted the close links between the sectors represented, and concrete measures were identified to continue the work of supporting

communities in achieving their health objectives. Finally, the primary goal of this first day of collaboration was to begin the process of developing a common approach to community development. This approach, taught by the Tamarack Institute, favours asset-based community development, which promotes a higher level of engagement and places a community's uniqueness at the heart of the discussions. Last but not least, this approach focuses on the development of a community's strengths rather than on a deficit model solely based on gaps.



"The missions of the regional service commissions revolve around the word "collaboration," and the two-day gathering that brought key Vitalité sectors and the commissions together in one room was very promising! You could feel that everyone shared a common belief in working together for the good of our communities."

- **Mélanie Ruest**, Acting Executive Director,  
Northwest Regional Service Commission

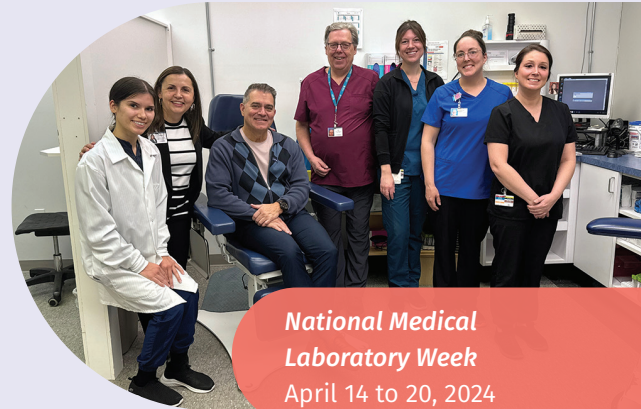
# Health care workers and volunteers, the driving force behind the Network

*At the Network, we take every opportunity to recognize and celebrate our volunteers and health care workers.*

**National Volunteer Week**  
April 14 to 20, 2024



**National Medical Laboratory Week**  
April 14 to 20, 2024



**Administrative Support Staff Week**  
April 21 to 27, 2024



**National Physicians' Day**  
May 1, 2024



**National Nursing Week**  
May 6 to 12, 2024



**Health Care Worker Appreciation Week**  
June 3 to 14, 2024



## Activity celebrating diversity

A friendly get-together was held on Thursday, May 23, 2024 at the Chaleur Regional Hospital giving health care workers from immigrant backgrounds the opportunity to meet their co-workers; exchange smiles, stories and experiences; and learn more about other cultures here and abroad. True to the values of Vitalité Health Network, the aim of this activity was to further a learning

culture marked by openness, curiosity and respect, and to boost synergy within teams by nurturing a sense of belonging among health care workers from immigrant backgrounds. Bathurst Mayor Kim Chamberlain and representatives of the Regional Service Commission and the Chaleur Region Multicultural Association took part in the meeting.



## Discovering the Cultural Fusion Committee

The Cultural Fusion Committee, which was established in February 2024, promotes cultural diversity in the health care workplace through awareness-raising activities. The thirteen members of the committee are dedicated to enhancing the cultural diversity gradually taking root within the Network. Activities such as international food tastings followed by parades and dances in traditional costumes as well as craft exhibitions have been featured in recent weeks. Given the success of the recent activities and of Black History Month at the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre, a similar roll-out is envisaged in the Network's other zones.



# 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.

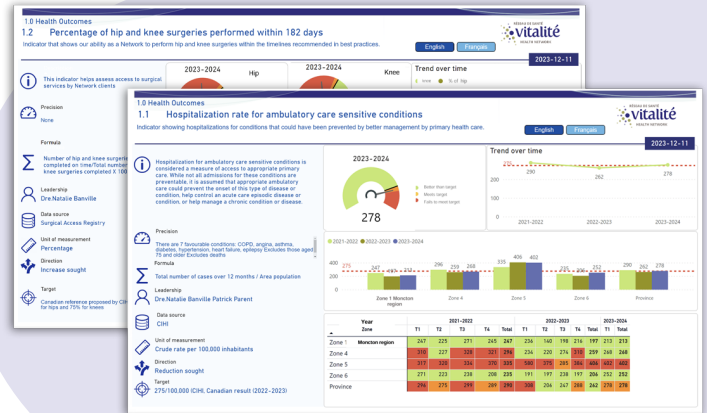
### For each key indicator, the report provides the:

- 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 to be held on Tuesday, June 25, 2024, at 1:30 p.m., at the Four Points by Sheraton hotel located at 40 Lady Ada Boulevard, in Moncton.

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 on the quarterly report, public meeting and annual general meeting of the Board and other Network initiatives.



The link to attend the meeting virtually will be posted on social media and on Vitalité Health Network’s website, under the Board of Directors tab and Meetings tab.  
[bit.ly/vitalitenb-meetings](https://bit.ly/vitalitenb-meetings)

Visit our website



[vitalitenb.ca](https://vitalitenb.ca)

Follow us



Contact us

Share your feedback, suggestions or comments with us by email at [engagement@vitalitenb.ca](mailto:engagement@vitalitenb.ca)

