



Rising above challenges

Improvement pathways at
Vitalité Health Network

QUARTERLY REPORT
TO THE COMMUNITY
SEPTEMBER 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

Every year, the quarter from July to September marks the end of summer and the start of new projects. Summer is always a demanding time for our teams, but health care needs never take a vacation. I would therefore like to underline the constant commitment of our teams and their loyalty to the Network, and thank them for ensuring the best care for our patients over the last few months.

Faced with increasing health care needs, largely due to an aging population, and a persistent shortage of human resources, it is crucial to be aware of these issues and to “rise above challenges”, as the theme of this report reminds us.

In the next few pages, you'll discover the efforts made and the outstanding performance of a number of projects carried out by our teams, notably to improve patient flow and access to primary health care, our two strategic priorities.

Over the next quarter, we will continue our projects and initiatives on 90-day execution cycles, implementing concrete actions that will be deployed and measured until objectives are achieved. At present, over forty improvement projects are underway at Vitalité Health Network, and 26 are in control, meaning they continue to be monitored to ensure that gains are maintained.

I'm proud to see the results progressing, and I want to thank and congratulate the teams for their dedication and perseverance, which enable us to rise above the challenges.

Happy reading!



Dr. France Desrosiers
President and CEO

Message from the Chairman of the Board of Directors

Summer 2024 marks the first year of operation for Vitalité Health Network's current Board of Directors. A lot has happened in a year! Among other things, I was able to see just how committed the Network teams are, and how much they care about the health of our communities.

Under the leadership of President and CEO Dr. Desrosiers, I have also seen a strong alignment with the Network's purpose and values. It's not just a question of organizational statements, but of giving meaning to daily work and the way it's carried out, based on values that are in tune with reality, from top management right down to frontline teams.

What's more, the Network has done a remarkable job of building closer ties with its communities. As you will see in this report, the implementation of learning communities continues, enabling these communities to mobilize to improve the health and wellness of their members.

I invite you to read this report and join me in congratulating the Vitalité Health Network teams on their collaborative vision, innovative initiatives and successes.



Mr. 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.



New local family health teams - A community serving a community

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 continued over the summer. To date, 17 local family health teams are fully operational across the Network, with a further 11 underway.

The results were encouraging. The teams set up over the last few months have succeeded in integrating 17,292 orphan patients into their initial patient base of 85,694.



LOCAL FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS

17 fully operational

11 underway



INTEGRATED ORPHAN PATIENTS

Over the last few months **17,225**

Initial patient base **85,277**

TOTAL 103,002

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

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

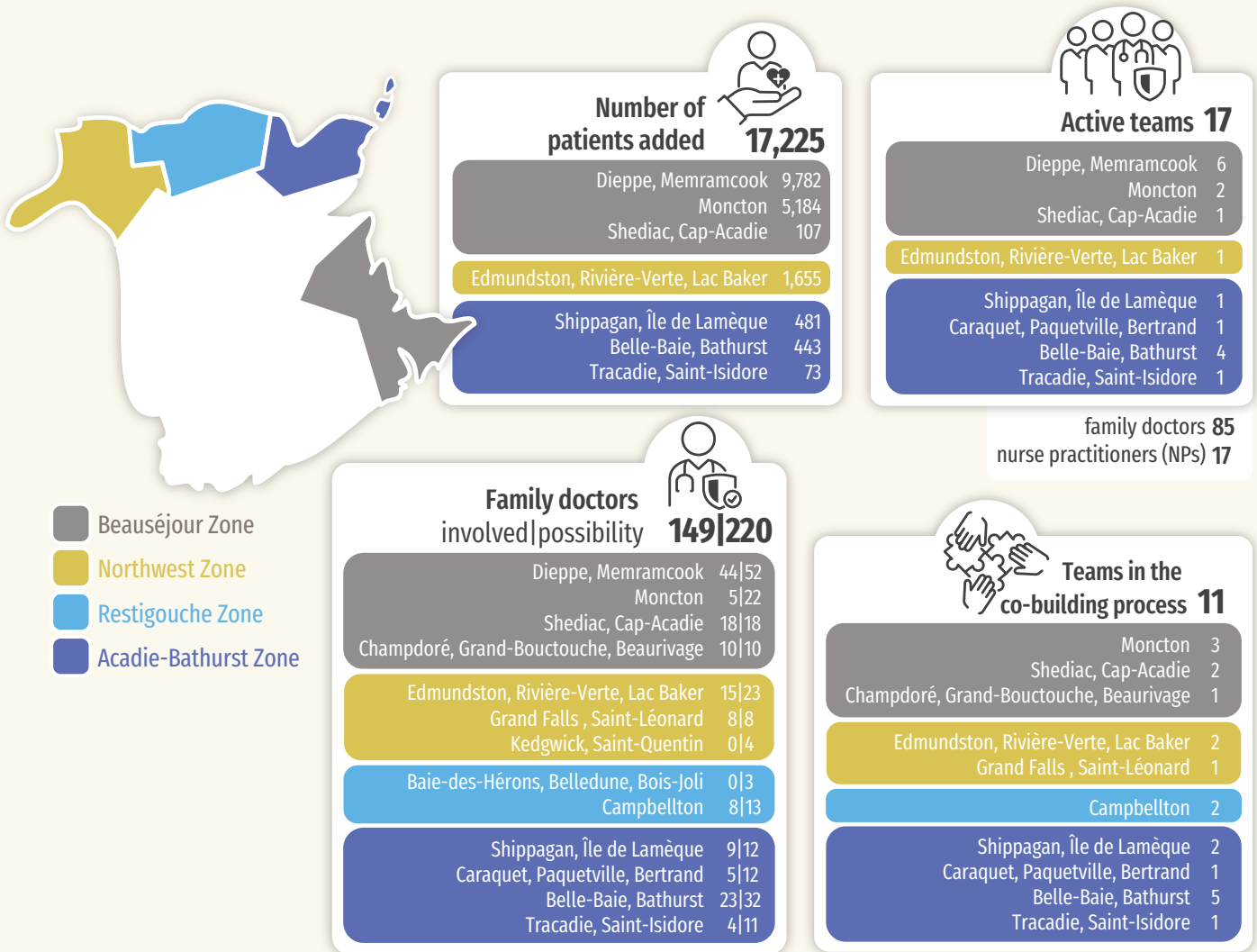
OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED BY 5 teams

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

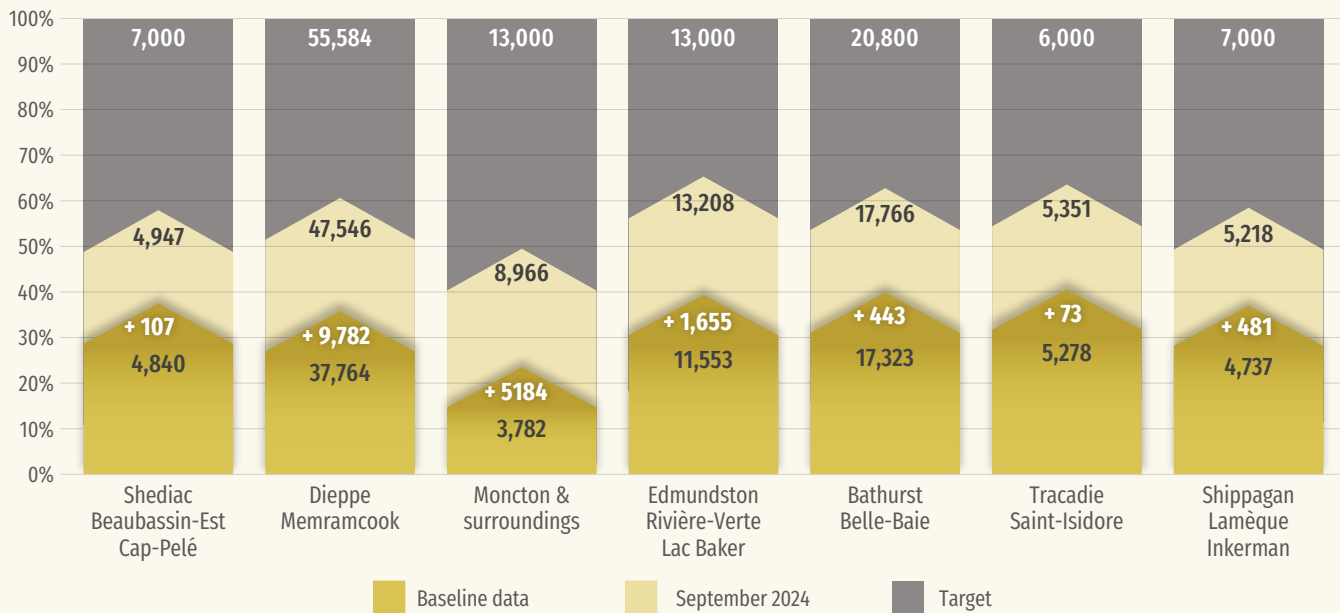
OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED BY 9 teams

To date, five local family health teams have achieved the goal of offering regular appointments within five days. In addition, nine teams are now able to respond to minor emergencies, offering appointments within 48 hours.

NUMBER OF PATIENTS TREATED BY ACTIVE TEAMS



NUMBER OF PATIENTS TREATED BY ACTIVE TEAMS



SUPPORT TO NURSE PRACTITIONERS (NPs)

Over the past year, four major initiatives designed to support NPs in their practice have been implemented:

- **Mentoring program** – Personalized support for new NPs to facilitate their integration, advise them on clinical management and support them in their day-to-day practice;
- **Communities of practice** – Quarterly meetings to discuss complex cases and share best practices;
- **Continuing education** – Regular sessions to maintain and develop skills;
- **Networking** – Biannual events in collaboration with the Université de Moncton to encourage the exchange of ideas and strengthen the sense of belonging.

These initiatives are a continuation of the actions undertaken in 2023, notably the creation of an NP advisory committee and the addition of a manager position dedicated to supporting and guiding the profession.



Patient flow - Reducing post-surgery hospital stays

Vitalité Health Network teams continued their efforts to advance one of the organization's major strategic priorities: improving patient flow and hospital performance.

The aim of this major project is to guarantee the immediate availability of beds for patients in need of acute care, and to ensure that every patient is cared for in the appropriate unit, by the right staff, at the right time.

Our teams work together to optimize the patient journey and experience at every stage, from admission to discharge and return to the community. Their mission is threefold:

- Improve efficiency in hospital resource management
- Ensure quick access to care
- Maintain or improve the quality of services provided

In recent months, significant progress has been made in the surgical unit at the Edmundston Regional Hospital. Orthopedic surgeons, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and a patient partner worked to improve care processes and reduce average length of stay.

One of the key objectives is to encourage patients to get up and walk soon after their operation, to help them regain their independence quickly and accelerate their discharge from hospital.

The addition of patient care attendants facilitated mobilization and resumption of walking. In addition, communication with patients has been reviewed at every stage of the process, from pre-operative preparation through to the post-operative recovery phase.



Key Results

ONE-DAY REDUCTION IN AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY for hip and knee surgeries • Edmundston Regional Hospital

OTHER SURGICAL RESULTS

Decrease of 393 in the number of surgeries pending between April 1 and June 31, 2024.

457 patients have been operated on using the surgical robot since its installation at the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre. - February 2023 to August 2024

REDUCTION OF PENDING SURGERIES

April 1, 2024 June 31, 2024
6,330 ▶ **5,937**

Reduction compared to June 2023 **393**

457 patients operated using the surgical robot



Transfuse with care - Preventing overuse of resources

In 2023, Vitalité Health Network joined Canada's Transfuse with Care campaign, aimed at reducing unnecessary red blood cell transfusions.

Since then, our four regional hospitals have achieved national benchmark standards. For patients, improved transfusion practices reduce the risk of transfusion-related complications. This also helps to support the optimal supply of blood products, an essential life-saving resource, while generating savings in terms of human and financial resources.

Over the past quarter, both the Campbellton Regional Hospital and the Edmundston Regional Hospital have received the Transfuse with Care designation, attesting to the proper use of blood products. The Chaleur Regional Hospital and the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre maintained their certification.



Measuring and optimizing registration waiting times

An improvement project at the Chaleur Regional Hospital has simplified the registration process and reallocated certain tasks in Admitting.

These adjustments have reduced the average registration time from 15 minutes in April 2024 to less than 9 minutes in August 2024.

Key Results

Chaleur Regional Hospital

REDUCTION IN AVERAGE REGISTRATION TIME

15 min April 2024 **▶** **9 min** August 2024 **= -6 min**

In addition, kiosks have been installed at all hospital facilities in the Acadie-Bathurst Zone, including the Chaleur Regional Hospital, the Lamèque Hospital and Community Health Centre, the Enfant-Jésus RHSJt Hospital in Caraquet and the Tracadie Hospital.

These devices provide the Network with reliable indicators of waiting times and instantaneous measurement of waiting room occupancy rates, to boost efficiency.



Liquid biopsy for frail patients

The Molecular Genetics Laboratory at the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre has acquired the capacity to perform liquid biopsy tests for lung cancer patients.

Performed using a simple blood test, liquid biopsy enables cancer-specific biomarkers to be detected and monitored non-invasively. It represents an alternative to tissue biopsies, which can be risky or even impossible for certain frail patients.

This achievement reflects the work carried out by teams at the Atlantic Cancer Research Institute in the field of liquid biopsy over the past 15 years.



VIDEO ADD-ON

Campbellton Rehabilitation Program

The Vitalité Health Network teams have set up a new rehabilitation program to help clients live independent, healthy, active and productive lives. The program brings together woodworking, sewing, crafts, photography and fly-tying workshops under one roof, as well as a music room, thrift store, gym, community kitchen and community garden.

These different areas of activity enable our clients to find a path and develop their skills through meaningful and rewarding occupations. Program client Colette Levesque explains how her involvement in the weekly operation of the thrift store contributes to her wellness.



Employee experience

In addition to recruitment initiatives, retention initiatives are also being implemented to improve attendance, commitment and job 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.



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, the patient experience and hospital performance.

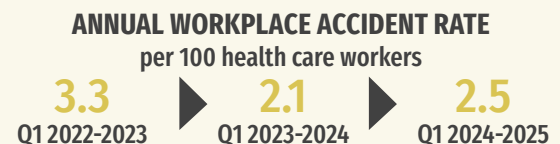
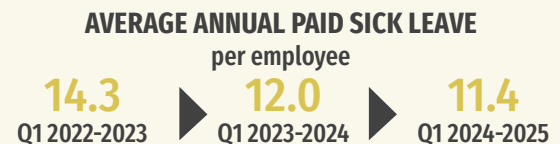
The annual average of paid sick leave days per Network employee was 11.4 in the first quarter of 2024–2025, compared with 12.0 in the first quarter of 2023–2024, a reduction of 5% and a reduction of 20% compared with 2022–2023. The Network has set itself the goal of achieving an annual average of 10 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 first quarter of 2024–2025, the annual lost-time accident rate stood at 2.5 accidents per 100 employees, which is below the target of 3.5, demonstrating progress in employee protection.

The team of health and safety advisors, with the collaboration of managers, also undertook compliance audits of workplaces. Following these audits, a number of risks were identified and action plans put in place with the areas concerned. All actions have been prioritized according to their risk level.

Our team of ergonomics advisors, in consultation with our occupational therapist, continues to offer support to workers in preventing musculoskeletal injuries. This is done through training sessions, assessments and recommendations based on the various needs.

Key Results



Recruitment and hires (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 constantly aligned with the organization's needs.

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
- Improved planning of recruitment events

International recruitment

Vitalité Health Network representatives took part in job fairs in Morocco, France and Belgium in the spring of 2024. Nearly 100 potential hires were identified at these events, and the recruitment team is working to confirm these hires. Additional missions are planned for 2024 in Morocco, France and Belgium. The Network is working with the Department of Health to identify other French-speaking international recruitment pools.

Key Results

April 1 to June 30, 2024

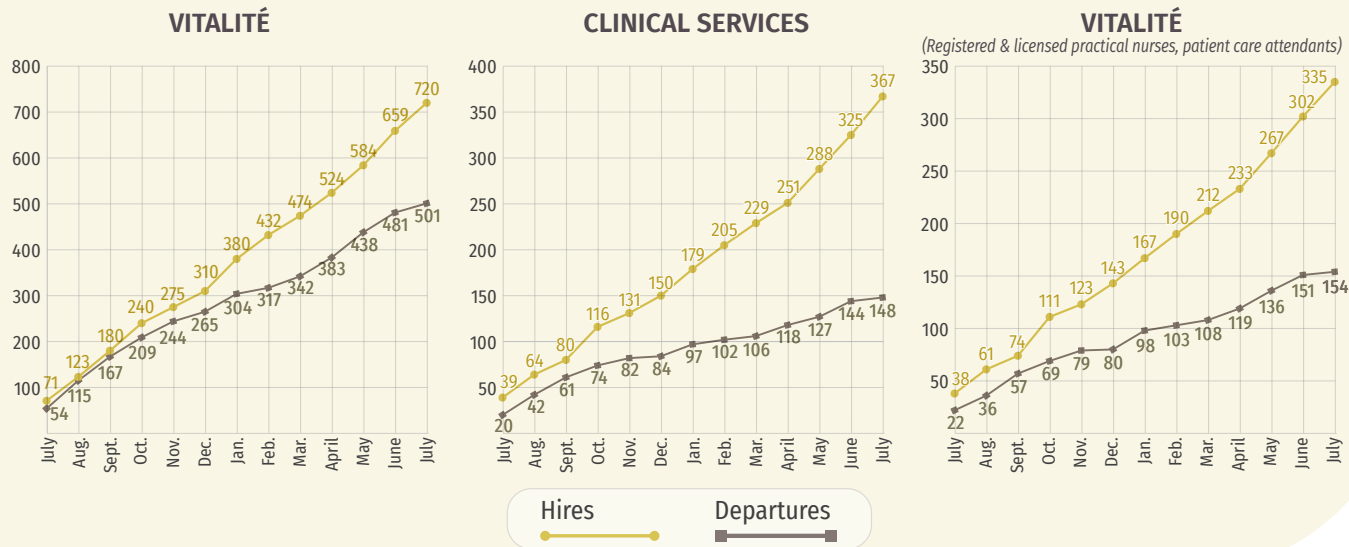
	Number of graduates hires*	Number of international hires*	International offers for which a response is pending	Other hires*
Registered nurses	N/A ¹	25 ^{**}	55	23
Licensed practical nurses	N/A ¹			3
Patient care attendants	N/A ¹			23
TOTAL	-	25	55	49

1. 2025 graduate hires will start in Fall 2025.
 * Accepted offers | **Will start as patient care attendants until registered in N.B.

Our national and international recruitment efforts over the past two years are bearing fruit. More than 100 international nurses started work at the Network in 2023, and more than 110 in the first six months of 2024. Recruiting newcomers is essential to the Network's efforts to wean agency nurses. These nurses begin their employment with the Network as patient care attendants, while waiting to meet the requirements for registration in New Brunswick. The Network is therefore working closely with the New Brunswick Community College, the training institution for new arrivals, to supervise the internships required for registration and contribute to the weaning plan for agency staff.



Number of new hires and departures at the Network



The employee experience at the heart of Vitalité Health Network's priorities

Following the success of its first edition in June, Vitalité Health Network is continuing its efforts to improve the employee experience by launching a second edition of its quarterly survey. This survey is part of an ongoing initiative to strengthen engagement and improve working conditions within the Network.

Thanks to the results of June's survey, a new key indicator, the employee net promoter score, has made it possible to better assess employee satisfaction and guide managers in implementing concrete actions to foster a more positive and stimulating work environment.

This survey is an essential tool for gathering employees' perceptions and suggestions in complete confidentiality.

The data collected are used to guide the Network's continuous improvement strategies, with the aim of creating a fulfilling workplace for all teams.

With this initiative, Vitalité Health Network reaffirms its commitment to placing the employee experience at the heart of its priorities, convinced that satisfied employees are essential to the achievement of its purpose and the quality of services provided.



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





Chantal Richardson, a model of engagement

Chantal has been with Vitalité Health Network's Communications and Engagement Department since May 2023, and embodies the very meaning of engagement in both her professional and personal life. In fact, when she has the opportunity to lead workshops on engagement or change management, she never fails to remind us of the Network's purpose, which is to foster the health of our patients and communities, today and tomorrow. Even her actions in the community reflect this conviction, as she organizes, on her own initiative, fundraisers to provide school supplies for children and funding for local food banks. Her community recently honoured her with the Community Recognition Award presented by the Tracadie Chamber of Commerce.

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.



Community Health Needs Assessment

Over the summer, Vitalité Health Network continued its efforts to build closer ties with communities. In the latest update on the progress of the five-year cycle of Community Health Needs Assessments, it was announced that only the assessments for the Memramcook and Dieppe, Bathurst, Beresford and Petit-Rocher, and Edmundston, Rivière-Verte and Lac Baker community groupings remain to be completed before a new cycle can begin.

In preparation, the team responsible for the assessments has already embarked on a process of continuous

improvement of their methodology to better engage communities, enhance the richness of the data and ensure that the needs identified are representative of local realities and the voice of the community. As for the community groupings currently active in the assessment, the team is currently drafting the report for Memramcook and Dieppe, at the community consultation stage for Bathurst, Beresford and Petit-Rocher, and at the engagement stage for the communities of Edmundston, Rivière-Verte and Lac Baker.



Learning communities

Learning communities also made headway during the summer. The Engagement sector, in collaboration with the Primary Health Care, Public Health and Performance sectors, took steps to add community-based learning approach coordinators. Each Vitalité Health Network zone will be able to count on the support of these individuals to mobilize stakeholders and amplify the assets of their communities, with a view to achieving more fluid communication between the health care system and communities, and capitalizing on collective intelligence. In fact, a meeting was held in the Restigouche region to enable community workers from different organizations to pool their work, explore avenues of collaboration and undertake a collective reflection on the results of the community health needs assessment. This first meeting kicks off the region's learning community.



"In my opinion, this community meeting was a landmark moment for community development and involvement in the Restigouche. These structured networking activities are essential for sharing information, activities, practices and opportunities, but above all for establishing a multi-sector concerted effort toward common goals with direct repercussions on the health and well-being of the population."

- **Pascal Saulnier, Director of Recreation,
Town of Baie-des-Hérons**



Pictured from left to right, front row, Nicole Robichaud (Resource Nurse, St-Joseph Community Health Centre - SJCHC), Jill Doucet (Community Development Officer, SJCHC), Chantal Bernard (Learning Communities Coordinator), Mélanie Guitard (Community and tourism Development Coordinator, Campbellton Regional Community), Vanessa Bujold (Collaboratrice vie-carrière, District scolaire francophone Nord-Est), Marie-Claude Thériault (Facility activities manager – St-Joseph Community Health Centre, SJCHC), Émilie Cossette (Community Development Officer, Rural Community of Kedgwick), Renelle Marin (Development Officer, Village of Bois-Joli), Ndèye Siga Sall (Health Promoter, Public Health), Wanzor Beaubrun (Community Development Advisor, Public Health). Back row, Stéphane Dupuy (Manager, Public Health), Manon Laviolette (Health Promoter, Public Health), Pascal Saulnier (Recreation Director, Town of Baie-des-Hérons).

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

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

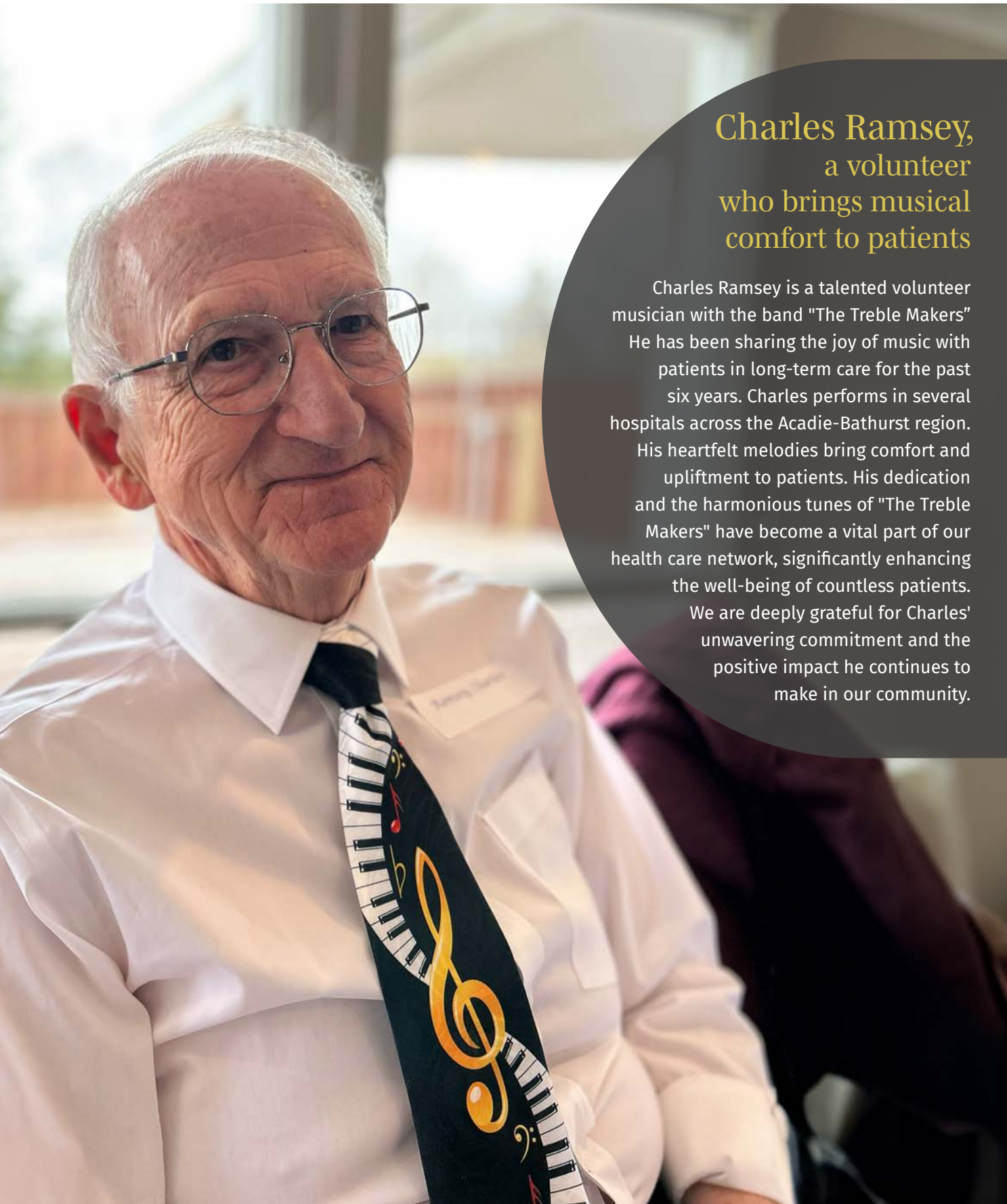
Becca Schofield Day celebrated in facilities

Every year, a call for kind gestures goes out on *Becca Schofield Day*, the third Saturday in September.

Vitalité Health Network's management enthusiastically joined the movement by offering a small snack to health care workers on September 21, 2024, to thank them for their ongoing commitment to patients.

Rebecca Schofield died of brain cancer at the age of 18, but her message of caring lives on through this day established by the Government of New Brunswick.





Charles Ramsey, a volunteer who brings musical comfort to patients

Charles Ramsey is a talented volunteer musician with the band "The Treble Makers". He has been sharing the joy of music with patients in long-term care for the past six years. Charles performs in several hospitals across the Acadie-Bathurst region. His heartfelt melodies bring comfort and upliftment to patients. His dedication and the harmonious tunes of "The Treble Makers" have become a vital part of our health care network, significantly enhancing the well-being of countless patients. We are deeply grateful for Charles' unwavering commitment and the positive impact he continues to make in our community.

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 public meeting of the Board of Directors to be held on Tuesday, October 29, 2024, at 1:30 p.m., at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, 100 Rice Street, Edmundston.

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 link to participate in the meeting virtually will be published on social media and on Vitalité Health Network’s website bit.ly/vitalitenb-reunions

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