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May 21, 2020

It is with extreme disappointment that the Council of the Town of Oxbow writes today. The suspension of emergency services for an indefinite period to our community puts us, and our surrounding communities, at risk; from our seniors to our producers.

From what we understand, this course of action is meant to mitigate a POTENTIAL threat of COVID. Each year with farming operations, there are KNOWN risks. We are entering the busiest season of the year in rural areas - seeding, haying and harvest, which carry the most risks for farmers and those who live in rural areas. The increase in traffic and large equipment operations alone increases this potential, not to mention the oil, gas and coal industries that keep this province running. To learn that those who do sustain injuries will be put on "bypass" to reach another facility, which in any case is at least 30 miles and could mean certain death is alarming to say the least.

As you may well know, Oxbow is already experiencing disruptions to EMS ambulance services due to being short-staffed and we fear that the increased responsibilities and travel time placed on EMTs will leave our community with NO emergency medical services at all. Will the health authority be providing additional support and resources for EMTs during this closure?

The people of this community and area have been diligent in following the provincial guidelines to avoid an outbreak of COVID quite successfully and it now seems that these same constituents are being "punished" for their diligence. While we are sure that the province has considered all the variables, we are extremely unhappy that our recognizance has resulted in a reduced safe area for us to work and live.

We look forward to further discussions with the Province and the Health Authority to help us better understand the plan to re-open our ER and return Oxbow to the full range of services that have been provided prior to 8:00 AM today.

Respectfully,

Lisa M. Pierce, CMMA; RMA
CAO, Town of Oxbow

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