

Letter - Nightmare healthcare

Published: **February 10, 2011 10:00 AM**

I am one of the “lucky” ones who has had to be transported off-island for emergency surgery. I had appendicitis, and at that time, although we had a surgery and surgeon on the island, the anaesthesiologist was off-island on holidays, so I was transported to Duncan on the ferry.

The ambulance attendants could not have been kinder or more efficient — they were excellent! However, they could not control the climate, or the time it took to get to Duncan. We arrived in Crofton in the pouring rain, and I had to be moved from the Salt Spring ambulance to the one that arrived at the ferry terminal to pick me up for transport to Duncan, in the pouring rain, with all the rubber-neckers overseeing my embarrassment.

By the time I arrived in Duncan, my appendix had ruptured, requiring me to spend over a week over there to be assured that I would not die of an infection.

It is very difficult for family and friends to visit you if you are in a hospital in Duncan or Victoria, and very demoralizing. It is bad enough when you have a life-threatening event and there is no other choice (as was in my case), but I can only imagine how it would feel to be someone undergoing cancer treatment, or having a seriously ill child shipped to Victoria or Duncan just because we don't have a facility on Salt Spring Island to care for them.

Does VIHA factor in the cost to the taxpayer who must be there to oversee the care of a sick child or elderly parent when they must either stay in hotels or take the ferry every day? I think not!

We have a relatively large population here and are entitled to appropriate facilities to care for our sick, injured and elderly. As taxpayers it is our right!

Margaret Gabel,

Ganges