

Island's health-care report nearly complete

Gulf Islands Driftwood

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The health needs assessment for Salt Spring initiated by the Vancouver Island Health Authority last summer should be released for public discussion within the next two months.

“We’re getting close,” said Grant Hollett, VIHA’s regional director for planning and community engagement, who is in charge of the study.

“It will be May or June at the latest,” he said last week.

Hollett said he was asked to do a bit more internal consultation — specifically with physician leaders in the community — after he first tabled the report with VIHA’s executive during the third week in March.

Last fall Hollett talked to representatives from various Salt Spring stakeholder groups. From January through March he gathered input from physicians and others working directly in the medical field through VIHA.

Once the report has VIHA clearance, it will be released to the public domain and its conclusions and recommendations will be discussed at a public meeting. Hollett said he could not provide a preview of his recommendations.

The health needs assessment was initiated after an outcry that arose from VIHA’s failure to recruit a surgeon for Lady Minto Hospital since July of 2008.

When the review was announced in August 2009, VIHA president and CEO Howard Waldner said it would help VIHA “provide better care today and plan sustainable services for the future.”

Also at that time, VIHA said the study would not preclude any service from being offered at Lady Minto Hospital.