

>> Announcer: TONIGHT ...

>> Sarah: THE LONG WEEKEND IS UPON US.

>> SAFETY, SAFETY. SAFETY EQUIPMENT.

>> Sarah: THE MESSAGE FROM POLICE TO DRIVERS.

>>> PLUS, SPEAKING THEIR MINDS.

>> REOPEN THE MMNR. WE WANT IT OPEN NOW.

>> Sarah: WHAT PEOPLE IN MINDEN HAVE TO SAY AHEAD OF THE OPENING OF AN URGENT CARE CLINIC.

>>> AND EXPANDING ENROLMENT.

>> HELPING PARAMEDICS TRAIN AND ENTER THE PROFESSION RIGHT HERE IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITY.

>> Sarah: HUNDREDS OF ADDED SPACES TO HELP HE STAFFING SHORTAGES.

[ â™© ]

>> Announcer: CTV NEWS WITH SARAH FREEMARK.

>> Sarah: THE ESCAPE NORTH HAS BEGUN FOR THE FIRST LONG WEEKEND OF THE SUMMER.

THERE'S A LOOK.

WITH SCHOOL COMING TO AN END AND SATURDAY BEING CANADA DAY, MANY PEOPLE GOT AN EARLY JUMP BY HEADING TO COTTAGE COUNTRY TONIGHT.

GOOD EVENING.

THE ANNUAL CANADA DAY LONG WEEKEND TREK NORTH IS WELL UNDERWAY WITH A STEADY STREAM OF TRAFFIC MAKING ITS WAY UP THE 400 TODAY.

AND WITH THE MIGRATION NORTH COMES A REMINDER FROM POLICE ABOUT SOME OF THE THINGS THAT THEY SAY HAVE SADLY BECOME A PART OF SUMMER WEEKEND TRAFFIC.

CTV'S ROB COOPER SPENT THE DAY WITH AUTHORITIES AND BRINGS US THE DETAILS.

>> SAFETY, SAFETY. SAFETY EQUIPMENT.

CANADA DAY IS HERE.

THE LONG WEEKEND IS HERE.

SUMMER VACATION IS HERE.

>> Reporter: WITH THAT, PEOPLE

ARE OFFICIALLY ON THE GO.  
SOME USED THIS LAST DAY OF  
SCHOOL TO TRY TO BEAT THE FRIDAY  
TREK NORTH THIS LONG WEEKEND.  
SOME DRIVERS SAY THURSDAY HAS  
BECOME THE NEW FRIDAY ON OUR  
HIGHWAYS.

>> TYPICAL FRIDAY.

NOW PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT  
GOING WEDNESDAY.

MIGHT AS WELL TAKE TWO WEEKS  
OFF.

START MONDAY.

[LAUGHTER]

>> Reporter: HIGHWAY 400

STARTED GETTING BUSY BY  
MID-AFTERNOON TODAY.

POLICE SAY SOME RECENT  
STATISTICS ARE TROUBLING TO HEAR  
AND ARE PLEADING WITH DRIVERS TO  
FOLLOW THE ROAD'S SIMPLE RULES.

>> RIGHT NOW, SEAT BELTS AND  
SAFETY EQUIPMENT IS THE ONLY  
CATEGORY OF THE BIG 4 THAT WE'VE  
SEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN  
ROAD DEATHS.

466 PEOPLE DIED IN THE LAST FIVE  
YEARS BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT  
WEARING THEIR SAFETY EQUIPMENT.  
WE'VE ALREADY HAD 160 PEOPLE DIE  
IN COLLISIONS ALL ACROSS THE  
PROVINCE.

>> Reporter: A RECENT SURVEY  
CONDUCTED BY THE CANADIAN  
AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION SHOWS FAR  
TOO MANY PEOPLE ARE NOT PAYING  
ATTENTION BEHIND THE WHEEL THESE  
DAYS.

>> IN OUR SURVEY, 44% OF  
RESPONDENTS DID ADMIT TO DRIVING  
AT SOME POINT OF HAVING DRIVEN  
DISTRACTED AND MEETING THE  
DEFINITION OF A DISTRACTED  
DRIVER.

THAT IS AN INCREASE UP FROM 2022  
AND ALSO FROM 2019.

>> THAT'S NO SURPRISE BECAUSE WE  
HAVE A CAT IN THE CAR AND A DOG.  
SO WHENEVER WE'RE ON, WE HAVE TO  
BE CAREFUL THAT WE DON'T HIT  
ANYBODY.

>> Reporter: YOU'VE BEEN  
DISTRACTED YOURSELF.

>> YOU'VE GOT GADGETS, KIDS IN

THE VEHICLES, ALL KINDS OF THINGS GOING ON AROUND YOU. IT'S VERY NORMAL FOR PEOPLE TO BE DISTRACTED.

>> Reporter: NOW, THE PRICE OF GAS IS EXPECTED TO JUMP ABOUT 4 CENTS A LITRE FOR REGULAR TOMORROW.

POLICE ONCE AGAIN REMINDING DRIVERS THEY WILL BE OUT IN FULL FORCE ON THE 400 THIS LONG WEEKEND, SO KEEP THAT IN MIND BEFORE HEADING OUT.

ROB COOPER, CTV NEWS, BARRIE.

>> Sarah: A 59-YEAR-OLD WOMAN ESCAPED MAJOR INJURY AFTER A CAR STRUCK A TREE IN BARRIE THIS MORNING.

A DOORBELL CAMERA CAPTURED THE COLLISION RIGHT HERE, JUST BEFORE 7:30 A.M. AT MARCEL MARSELLUS AND MAPLEVIEW DRIVE IN BARRIE.

THE COLLISION CAUSED SEVERE DAMAGE TO THE VEHICLE AND ALSO DAMAGED A FIRE HYDRANT AND AALNI INJURIES AND POLICE SAY NO CHARGES WERE LAID.

>>> A 33-YEAR-OLD WOMAN HAS BEEN ARRESTED AFTER A SUSPECTED ROBBERY LEFT A MAN SERIOUSLY INJURED AT A BARRIE HOTEL EARLIER THIS WEEK.

OFFICERS WERE CALLED TO THE QUALITY INN ON HART DRIVE JUST AFTER 8:30 A.M. ON TUESDAY, AFTER WHAT POLICE SAY WAS A DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN.

A 63-YEAR-OLD RICHMOND HILL MAN WAS FOUND WITH SERIOUS INJURIES AND WAS TAKEN TO A TORONTO TRAUMA CENTRE WITH INJURIES TO BOTH HIS HEAD AND HIS FACE. INVESTIGATORS SECURED VIDEO SURVEILLANCE OF THE WOMAN LEAVING THE HOTEL AND YESTERDAY SHE WAS ARRESTED NEAR QUEEN'S PARK IN BARRIE'S DOWNTOWN. SHE HAS NOW BEEN CHARGED WITH AGGRAVATED ASSAULT, ASSAULT WITH A WEAPON, AND ASSAULT.

>>> A COMMUNITY HALL IN MINDEN HILLS WAS PACKED WITH PEOPLE TODAY, SOME OF WHOM HAD A LOT TO

SAY.

RESIDENTS FROM FAR AND WIDE TOOK  
ADVANTAGE OF THE CHANCE TO HEAR  
FROM THE LEADER OF THE  
ORGANIZATION THAT SHUT DOWN THE  
TOWN'S EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT.  
CTV'S DANA ROBERTS HAS BEEN  
FOLLOWING THIS STORY TODAY AND  
JOINS US LIVE NOW.

DANA, GOOD EVENING TO YOU.  
WERE TENSIONS RUNNING HIGH  
TODAY?

>> Reporter: WELL, SARAH, THAT  
IS ONE WAY TO PUT IT.

GOOD EVENING TO YOU AS WELL.  
AFTER ONLY BEING IN THE ROLE FOR  
ABOUT TWO WEEKS' TIME NOW, THE  
NEW HEAD OF HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS  
HEALTH SERVICES STOOD IN A ROOM  
IN FRONT OF ANGRY MIDDEN  
RESIDENTS TELLING THEM WHY THEY  
NO LONGER HAVE AN E.D. CLOSE TO  
HOME.

>> WHY IS THERE NOT A HOSPITAL  
IN MINDEN?

[APPLAUSE]

>> Reporter: FOR THE FIRST  
TIME TODAY, ROBOTS OF MINDEN  
HILLS GETTING THE HOSPITAL  
TO REOPEN HEARD BY HOSPITAL  
LEADERSHIP.

>> MY QUESTION IS: DO YOU REALLY  
TRULY BELIEVE THIS WAS THE RIGHT  
DECISION?

>> Reporter: VERONICA NELSON  
HOSTING THE FIRST OF FOUR  
COMMUNITY TOWN HALLS CENTERED ON  
THE ISSUE OF THE E.D. CLOSURE  
DUE TO STAFFING SHORTAGES.

>> MANY HOSPITALS HAVE CLOSED  
FOR DAYS OR NIGHTS OR HAVE  
LIMITED HOURS.

HALIBURTON COUNTY, WE DON'T WANT  
TO DO THAT.

SO THE WAY WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO  
KEEP OUR EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT  
OPEN IS BY CONSOLIDATING OUR  
STAFF AND OUR PHYSICIANS TO ONE  
SITE.

>> Reporter: ACCORDING TO  
NELSON, HALIBURTON WAS SELECTED  
BASED ON ITS ALREADY EXISTING  
IN-PATIENT SERVICE CAPACITIES.  
SHE POINTED TO DATA THAT

SUGGESTS PATIENTS ON AVERAGE HAVE ONLY WAITED TWO TO THREE HOURS FOR TREATMENT AT THE CONSOLIDATED HALIBURTON E.D., BUT ONE WOMAN HAD A DIFFERENT STORY TO TELL.

>> MY APPENDIX WAS ON THE VERGE OF RUPTURING.

IT WAS LEAKING.

AND MY DAUGHTER HAD TO GUIDE ME BECAUSE THERE WAS NO AMBULANCE. SO 16 HOURS TO -- IN HALIBURTON EMERG TO SAY, OH, YOU BETTER GO TO BRACEBRIDGE.

>> Reporter: MANY RESIDENTS WANT MORE ANSWERS WITH THE LEADER OF ONE ADVOCACY GROUP SAYING HE'S WAITING FOR A CALL FROM THE PREMIER ON APPOINTING A PROVINCIAL SUPERVISOR.

>> TO REVIEW THE DECISIONS, REVIEW THE FINANCIALS, AND LET'S GET THAT SUPERVISOR APPOINTED TODAY AND LET'S REOPEN THE MINDEN E.R. TOGETHER.

>> Reporter: NELSON SAYING NEW SCHEDULING MEASURES, REDUCING AGENCY STAFF, AND ADVOCATING FOR MORE FUNDING FROM THE PROVINCE ARE ALL PART OF THE PLAN TO TACKLE THE DEFICIT.

BUT AT AN UNRELATED FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT IN BARRIE TODAY, HEALTH MINISTER SYLVIA JONES SAYING THE DECISION TO CLOSE WAS LEFT TO HSS AND WASN'T ABOUT MONEY.

>> WE WORKED VERY CLOSELY WITH THE HHHS TO MAKE SURE THEY HAD THE RESOURCES THEY NEEDED, VERY SPECIFICALLY ASKED THE QUESTION ABOUT, IF YOU HAD ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE PROVINCE, WOULD THAT IMPACT OR CHANGE YOUR DECISION? AND THE ANSWER WAS VERY CLEARLY NO.

>> Reporter: AND, SARAH, TODAY'S TOWN HALL CAME JUST ONE DAY AHEAD OF AN URGENT CARE CLINIC SET TO OPEN IN THE SAME SPACE WHERE THE TOWN'S EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ONCE WAS. NELSON ALSO SAYING THERE ARE

PLANS IN PLACE TO OPEN ANOTHER CLINIC FOCUSED ON WOUND TREATMENT AND THERAPY CARE AND IF YOU DIDN'T MAKE IT TODAY, SARAH, THERE WILL BE THREE MORE TOWN HALLS TO HAVE YOUR VOICES HEARD IN THE COMING WEEKS. REPORTING LIVE, I'M DANA ROBERTS.

IT'S BACK INSIDE TO YOU.

>> Sarah: THANKS, DANA.

>>> THE PROVINCE ALSO ANNOUNCING TODAY IT'S EXPANDING ENROLMENT FOR PARAMEDIC PROGRAMS ACROSS ONTARIO WITH THE ADDITION OF 300 SPACES, A MOVE THAT IT HOPES WILL IMPROVE PARAMEDIC STAFFING AND RESPONSE TIMES AND EASE THE BURDEN ON OUR OVERWHELMED HOSPITALS.

CTV'S MIKE ARSALIDES REPORTS.

>> PARAMEDICS PLAY A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

THEY STEP UP DAY IN AND DAY OUT TO KEEP COMMUNITIES ACROSS ONTARIO SAFE AND HEALTHY.

>> Reporter: BOLSTERING

PARA-MEDICINE PROGRAMS ACROSS ONTARIO, TODAY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH SYLVIA JONES ANNOUNCED GEORGIAN COLLEGE WILL ADD 20 SPACES TO ITS TWO-YEAR PRIMARY PARAMEDIC PROGRAM.

>> WE WANT TO MAKE IT AS EASY AS POSSIBLE FOR ONTARIO STUDENTS LOOKING TO HAVE A CAREER IN EMERGENCY SERVICES TO ACCESS THE WORLD CLASS TRAINING OFFERED AT OUR COLLEGES.

>> Reporter: IN TOTAL, 300

SPACES ARE BEING ADDED AT MORE THAN A DOZEN ONTARIO COLLEGES. ADDING 20 MORE TO THE PRIMARY CARE PROGRAM AT GEORGIAN MEANS 50% MORE STUDENTS CAN ENROL IN THE TWO-YEAR PROGRAM.

>> FOR US WE CAN PRODUCE MORE GRADUATES FOR THE WORK FORCE.

THAT'S REALLY THE KEY HERE.

SO THOSE SERVICES THAT ARE LOOKING TO HIRE, THAT HAVE OPPORTUNITIES, THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE MORE GRADUATES NOW TO

CHOOSE FROM.

>> Reporter: THE COLLEGE SAYS 100% OF ITS STUDENTS HAVE BEEN HIRED IN THE COMMUNITY AFTER GRADUATING.

MANY WORKING FOR THE COUNTY OF SIMCOE, WHICH WORKS HAND IN HAND WITH LOCAL HOSPITALS LIKE RVH, WELCOMING TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT EL TO HELP FILL THE HEALTH CARE STAFFING SHORTAGE ACROSS THE REGION.

>> WE FACE THE SAME EMERGENCY PROBLEMS WE'RE HAVING WITH STAFFING, THAT PARAMEDICS ARE HAVING ACROSS THE PROVINCE, IT'S AFFECTING RESPONSE TIME, THEIR ABILITY TO RESPOND IN A TIMELY MANNER, ALL AFFECTS THE OUTCOMES FOR PATIENTS.

>> IT'S ALWAYS GREAT TO HAVE EXTRA PEOPLE ON THE ROAD JUST BECAUSE WE FIND OURSELVES NEEDING MORE BODIES EVERY SINGLE DAY.

PUTTING PEOPLE IN SEATS AND GETTING THEM TO CALLS WHERE THEY NEED TO BE AT THE RIGHT TIME.

>> Reporter: THE HEALTH MINISTER SAYING THE PROVINCE IS ALSO INVESTING \$51 MILLION OVER THREE YEARS TO HIRE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT STAFF DEDICATED TO THE TRANSFER OF PATIENTS FROM AMBULANCES TO RELIEVE GROWING STRESS ON THE HEALTH CARE.

GEORGIAN CONTINUING TO SERVE AS THAT VITAL PIPELINE FOR LOCAL FRONT LINE WORKERS.

THE PRIMARY CARE PARAMEDIC PROGRAM WILL GROW TO ITS LARGEST EVER CLASS STARTING THIS FALL WITH 62 STUDENTS.

MIKE ARSALIDES, CTV NEWS, BARRIE.

>> Sarah: THE BUSBY CENTRE AND THE CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION SIMCOE COUNTY BRANCH HAVE TEAMED UP TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF HOMELESSNESS. TODAY THE TWO ANNOUNCED THAT THE BUSBY CENTRE HAS ACQUIRED 88 AND 90 MULL CAST TER STREET FROM THE