



# **BILL NO. 52**

*Government Bill*

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*1st Session, 61st General Assembly  
Nova Scotia  
58 Elizabeth II, 2009*

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## **An Act to Provide Accountability Respecting Hospital Emergency Departments**

CHAPTER 4  
ACTS OF 2009

**AS ASSENTED TO BY THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
NOVEMBER 5, 2009**

The Honourable Maureen MacDonald  
*Minister of Health*

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*Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Printed by Authority of the Speaker of the House of Assembly*

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## **An Act to Provide Accountability Respecting Hospital Emergency Departments**

WHEREAS keeping hospital emergency departments open to provide safe, quality care and reducing wait times in health care is a Government of Nova Scotia responsibility;

AND WHEREAS district health authorities are responsible for effective management strategies throughout the health and hospital system, which have an impact on emergency department overcrowding and wait times, including appropriate staffing, training, consistency of standards and planning to ensure patient access to safe and timely care across Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it enacted by the Governor and Assembly as follows:

- 1** This Act may be cited as the *Emergency Department Accountability Act*.
- 2** The purpose of this Act is to provide public accountability to communities respecting emergency departments.
- 3** In this Act,
  - (a) “closure” of a particular emergency department means a closure that results in there being no emergency department services available to the public from that emergency department;
  - (b) “district health authority” means a district health authority as defined in the *Health Authorities Act*;
  - (c) “emergency department” means an emergency department operated by a district health authority;
  - (d) “Minister” means the Minister of Health.
- 4**
  - (1)** Where the emergency department of a district health authority has experienced an ongoing pattern of closure of the emergency department since the last public forum held by the district health authority pursuant to Section 18 of the *Health Authorities Act*, the district health authority shall consult with the community served by the emergency department as part of its next public forum pursuant to that Act.
  - (2)** The consultation must include consideration of proposed community solutions to keep open or re-open the emergency department or to provide alternative health services.
- 5**
  - (1)** The district health authority shall report, as soon as it is aware, of a potential closure and the reason for such closure to the Minister.
  - (2)** The district health authority shall report to the Minister within a reasonable period of time on all consultations pursuant to this Act and the actions taken or to be taken by the district health authority as a result of the consultations.

**6** The Minister shall table annually a report in the House of Assembly that provides

(a) the dates that all emergency rooms in the Province were closed and the reason for the closures, both by individual hospitals within a district health authority and in a district-by-district format;

(b) the nature and outcome of all consultations reported pursuant to subsection 5(2); and

(c) the actions taken or to be taken by the district health authority as a result of the consultations reported pursuant to subsection 5(2).

**7** This Act comes into force on such day as the Governor in Council orders and declares by proclamation.

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