

# *Saskatchewan Municipal* **Best Practice**

## **Kipling and District Health Foundation**

### **CONTACT**

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### **THE PRACTICE**

The current healthcare facility in the Town of Kipling was moving toward the end of its useful life. With healthcare of fundamental importance to the area's sustainability, it became clear that the area would need new facilities to attract economic growth. Eight towns, villages, and rural municipalities formed a non-profit foundation to act as a liaison between the health region and province, and to coordinate fundraising.

In June 2013, there was a sod turning ceremony for a new integrated health center in the Town of Kipling, attended by community volunteers, and dignitaries from Sun Country Health Region, the Ministry of Health, and all member municipalities:

- Town of Kipling
- RM of Kinsley #124
- RM of Hazelwood #94
- RM of Silverwood
- Town of Glenavon
- Village of Windthorst
- Village of Kennedy
- RM of Chester

### **THE PROCESS**

Once the Health Foundation Board was formed, each council appointed a representative. The board determined a chair, treasurer, and secretary from within the appointed representatives.

Each individual municipality's share was determined by equal reference to population and assessment base. It was expected to take approximately 15 years to gather adequate funding. Each municipality kept their required portion of funds in a separate account to be available upon request. Ratepayers could also make additional donations to the building or equipment fund directly through the Health Foundation. Volunteers raised additional funds through lunches, auctions, banquets, and bequests.

The foundation worked with the health region and province to get approval for a new facility. Over the years, the foundation's role evolved, and it took the lead role in recruiting doctors and building the medical clinic.

## THE RESULTS

This project has given Kipling and surrounding area a renewed sense of community through working together for the benefit of the area. The Town of Kipling will benefit economically as they see healthcare professionals attracted to the area and strengthening of the business sector.

The project has also had a tremendous effect on community sustainability. The new facility gives seniors the security of knowing they can stay in the community and young families the security of knowing there is healthcare available for their children.

With the project spanning 15 years and including so many municipalities, communication was an identifiable challenge. The key to success was realized through consensus building in the decision-making process, and ensuring open communication and sharing of information.

The temporary closure of the present facility (Kipling Memorial Health Center) in 2012 due to loss of doctors, resulted in a loss of confidence in the project by the residents in Kipling and the area. Communication was the key to regaining trust and confidence in the project.

Communication with ratepayers was also important. The foundation provided regular financial statements, reports from the foundation to council meetings, updates in the local paper, and open public forums.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- One of the most significant lessons learned on this project was the importance of open communication with the public and member municipalities, especially with such a long timeline.
- A communication strategy should be implemented right from the start of the project. It should outline who will be in charge of communication, how often communication will take place, and the manner in which it will do so.