

BULLETIN

## Kimberley loses hospital

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**Kimberley is on the cutting edge** of a changing health care system," according to Mayor Jim Ogilvie. But others say the city is facing a double-edged sword with a project that could make the community pay more for fewer medical services.

The Interior Health Authority (IHA) gave Kimberley less than three weeks' notice their hospital would be closed. Sandy Luker was a lab technologist at the Kimberley and District Hospital and is HSAs former chief steward for the facility.

On April 23, 2002 she attended a meeting where staff were told in-patient admitting would close a week later on April 30 -- and the hospital would be completely shut down on May 10.

-There were other places in the province that were shut down," Luker said, -but there was nobody else that was shut down in just 17 days."

IHA Chair Alan Dolman said the closure was necessary to meet the provincial governments deficit reduction target for the region. The decision was made to close the Kimberley hospital and concentrate specialist services at Cranbrook Regional Hospital. The hospital is now known as East Kootenay Regional Hospital and is slated to receive \$95 million in capital upgrades.

Because the restructuring of services to Cranbrook was not already in place, some people, including Mayor Ogilvie, questioned the speed with which the Kimberley hospital was shut down.

-If Interior Health had said the hospital will be closed after we upgrade the Cranbrook hospital and well leave you with primary care, it would have been one thing. But they said, "We're closing it and were leaving you with nothing."

Luker agrees the closure was premature

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