Announcer: TONIGHT ...
Sarah: THE LONG WEEKEND IS UPON US.
Sarah: SAFETY, SAFETY.
Sarah: SAFETY EQUIPMENT.
Sarah: THE MESSAGE FROM POLICE TO DRIVERS.
Sarah: PLUS, SPEAKING THEIR MINDS.
Sarah: REOPEN THE MMNR.
Sarah: WE WANT IT OPEN NOW.
Sarah: WHAT PEOPLE IN MINDEN HAVE TO SAY AHEAD OF THE OPENING OF AN URGENT CARE CLINIC.
Sarah: AND EXPANDING ENROLMENT.
Sarah: 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.
Sarah: WITH SCHOOL COMING TO AN END AND SATURDAY BEING CANADA DAY, MANY PEOPLE GOT AN EARLY JUMP BY HEADING TO COTTAGE COUNTRY TONIGHT.
Sarah: GOOD EVENING.
Sarah: THE ANNUAL CANADA DAY LONG WEEKEND TREK NORTH IS WELL UNDERWAY WITH A STEADY STREAM OF TRAFFIC MAKING ITS WAY UP THE 400 TODAY.
Sarah: 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.
Sarah: CTV'S ROB COOPER SPENT THE DAY WITH AUTHORITIES AND BRINGS US THE DETAILS.
Sarah: SAFETY, SAFETY.
Sarah: SAFETY EQUIPMENT.
Sarah: CANADA DAY IS HERE.
Sarah: THE LONG WEEKEND IS HERE.
Sarah: 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
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-medic 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 ANNOUNCEMENTEl
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