

# Sussex-born doctor wins national award for research

**TAMMY SCOTT-WALLACE**

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Dr. Kyle McGivern, formerly of Sussex, has been awarded for research that points to a quicker, easier diagnosis of acute heart conditions in the emergency department using bedside ultrasound machines, as seen here in the Saint John Regional Hospital emergency department.

Photo: Submitted

**SUSSEX** • For Dr. Kyle McGivern, the best answer is not always the most common practice.

When patients can be more effectively diagnosed in the emergency room when time is of the

essence, it's worth the research time and effort to explore, he insists.

McGivery grew up in Sussex and is the lead investigator of an award-winning research project housed within the Saint John Regional Hospital's Emergency Medicine Program.

The research has been recognized by the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, and will be presented by McGivery at the association's national conference in Quebec City in June.

While he is a resident training in emergency medicine in Saint John and performs the regular duties one would expect of a doctor, McGivery has also committed three years to researching better ways to diagnose acute heart failure in that department.

His research project is nearly complete, he said, warning its title is quite the mouthful - Point of Care Ultrasound for lung B-lines in the early diagnosis of acute decompensated heart failure in the Emergency Department: A systematic review and meta-analysis.

"Long title, I know, but essentially what we're trying to do with this research is find new ways to diagnose a common condition in emergency departments," he said. "Increasingly, emergency physicians are using bedside ultrasound to help diagnose many conditions as it is quicker, cheaper, and often more accurate than conventional tests.

"Congestive heart failure is a difficult problem for us to diagnose in the ED with blood work and x-rays. Our research is suggesting that we can accurately diagnose this condition at the bedside in just a few minutes with ultrasound."

The speedy diagnosis means patients can get appropriate treatment faster than they normally would which earlier research shows leads to better outcomes, McGivery said.

"The neat thing about this project is it is not limited to large hospitals like Saint John. Many rural hospitals now have ultrasound machines in their emergency departments and can use this technology to diagnose patients especially after hours when x-rays and blood work may be limited or time-consuming," he said. "The thing I love about this research is that it can impact a large number of patients in not only urban centres but also rural hospitals. This is of particular interest to me being from Sussex and having spent much of my training in rural and remote areas."

The emergency medicine research program at the Saint John Regional Hospital, led by Dr. Paul Atkinson, seeks to find new ways to help emergency care patients in New Brunswick and across Canada, and for three consecutive years has been recognized with CAEP awards. The researchers' work is supported with funds from the Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation.

"Winning this award is of course exciting as our team has put a ton of effort into the project over the last two years," McGivery said. "Despite being a small city in the far east, the Saint John Emergency Medicine Research Program continues to get recognition nationally for its research. I think we definitely feel some pride when we see our research alongside major cities and hospitals from across Canada.

"Ultimately, though, this is about a new test that we really believe can help our patients."

McGivery has lead the research investigation but its been a team effort, he said. The research team consists of Atkinson as supervisor, along with Dr. David Lewis, Luke Taylor, Prof. Tim Harris, Jacqueline Fraser and Kathleen Gadd.

The son of Bob and Linda McGivery graduated from Sussex Regional High School in 2004, and completed an undergraduate science degree with a double honours in biology and psychology at St. Mary's University before moving to Newfoundland for medical school at Memorial University. To help pay for tuition he held summer jobs at the PotashCorp mine, was a bike mechanic at Source for Sports in Sussex, and worked at the Maritime Atlantic ferry terminal in Newfoundland.

But his work got real serious and his future as a doctor took better shape when he worked in the Sussex Health Centre's emergency department throughout medical school.

"It was learning with the doctors there which really secured my interest in practicing community-based emergency medicine," McGivery said. When he finished medical school, he wanted to move back to New Brunswick and was able to with Saint John's unique residency program through Dalhousie University. He has one more year to spend in the three-year program.

"This is the only training program of its kind in Canada and is the perfect fit for those of us looking to practice emergency medicine and family medicine, particularly in a community setting," the avid hockey player and mountain biker added.

Nicole Beckett, a medical student at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick, was awarded the CAEP prize for Top Medical Student Research Project for her work looking at the combined role of ultrasound and electrocardiography for predicting outcomes during cardiac arrest resuscitation. She is also a part of the Saint John Region Hospital's emergency medicine research program.

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