

Oakville Beaver

Investing in the future

Guest Editorial
April 15, 2010

Next Monday, Oakville Town councillors will be asked to make one of the most important decisions concerning the future of our town. They will vote on the requested municipal contribution for the new Oakville hospital.

We at Halton Healthcare Services (HHS) know this is a substantial amount of money and councillors have a big decision before them. They also have a great opportunity before them — an opportunity to demonstrate a shared vision for the future of Oakville.

People choose to live in Oakville because of our high standard of living — health and access to high-quality health care is central to this quality of life we enjoy and value.

A new, modern hospital for Oakville will mean:

- Increased capacity to care for Oakville's growing and aging population
- Timelier access to care, close to home
- Advanced clinical equipment for faster diagnoses
- A new cancer clinic
- Increased privacy and improved infection control for patients and families

Building a new hospital for Oakville is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Oakville is very fortunate to have approval and a funding commitment from the Province to construct a new hospital at a time when the government is faced with serious fiscal constraints. This opportunity may never be presented again and we cannot afford to let it pass us by.

The current Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital (OTMH) has served Oakville well, but it is an aging facility with no room to grow. OTMH was established more than 60 years ago when a group of citizens had the foresight to build a hospital for Oakville in Oakville. I am confident our municipal leaders have the same foresight.

Our Town and Regional councillors have been very diligent in asking questions on behalf of residents. The comments, questions and words of encouragement forwarded to us have been very insightful. We have done our very best to provide the information Council needs to make an informed decision.

We have been asked to disclose the full estimated costs for the project. In order to preserve the integrity of the competitive bidding process for the project, Infrastructure Ontario does not allow this disclosure to happen publicly at this time. With their proven track record, we believe the procurement

process established by Infrastructure Ontario will deliver our project on time and on budget while providing value for money.

The estimated cost for the new Oakville hospital has been thoroughly researched and planned.

The cost will be disclosed to Town Council and the public next year after the developer for the project has been selected.

Halton Healthcare Services has guaranteed Town Council that we will not be asking for more municipal funding for the new Oakville hospital.

With the financial support of the Town of Oakville confirmed, Halton Healthcare Services will submit its local share plan to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for approval, which will allow for the release of the request for proposals to developers for bids to construct the new Oakville hospital.

This is the last major milestone before the project is awarded, with construction starting in 2011.

Town staff has prepared a comprehensive report with recommendations on how to fulfill the Town's contribution.

We are encouraged by the recommendations put forth by staff and are appreciative of the time and effort that has been devoted to this request.

We need your support to ensure the health care services Oakville's families require today, tomorrow or 30 years from now will be available.

Together, with your support, we can make the new Oakville hospital a reality.

John Oliver is the president/CEO of Halton Healthcare Services.