

# Acton's new medical clinic open soon

By Frances Niblock

Doctors will be seeing patients by April 1 at Acton's new Medical and Urgent Care Clinic located on Mill Street at Eastern Avenue.

That's the time target according to Jordan Struk, an engineer working on the project, a joint venture by Acton physician Dr. Nather

Alshakarji and a development company owned by Struk's mother-in-law, Mrs. Shamim Warren, whose company built the Milton Professional Centre and a medical clinic in Peterborough.

The 10,199-square-foot, one-story building on a vacant property bordered by Mill Street, Church Street, Eastern Avenue and Fel-

lows Street will house doctors' offices, 10 examination rooms, a dentist's office, pharmacy, massage therapists, a nurse practitioner, a walk-in clinic and a chiropractor's office.

"We're working on interior finishes right now – the cabinetry, the painting, carpeting, flooring and the other final surface finishes. Externally, the landscaping

and final asphalt will wait for spring. The construction activity will really ramp up this week, and in three weeks we should be finished," Struk said, adding they are on time and on budget.

"We have one office unit left to offer and are in talks with several individuals, but so far no one has signed a lease," Struk said.

Along with Dr. Alshakarji, who began seeing Acton patients part-time at the Acton Medical Centre on Mill Street following the August 2000 death of Dr. Brian Moore, the new clinic will include Dr. Dhanya Jayalath and Dr. Ahmed Alkadhimi who came to Acton last summer and a nurse practitioner.

"This has been such a long time coming – we're really excited," Struk said noting that a lack of fully-accessible medical offices has been an on-going issue in attempting to attract new physicians to Acton, and recruitment officials said the new facility is a welcome incentive to help sell Acton as a good location for a doctor.

# Acton still short physicians

## Region touts recruitment successes

By Frances Niblock

Halton claims that its physician recruitment program posted "impressive results" is not reality in Acton, which remains the most under-served community in Halton for family practitioners.

A Halton press release reported that since 2003, the program has helped bring over 90 new family doctors to Halton. While Acton has replaced retiring or dying physicians, it still, as part of Halton Hills, needs five more doctors using the doctor/patient ratio of one doctor to 1,380 patients.

While a physician currently doing some work in Georgetown "may do something in Acton," that is the only current action in on-going efforts to attract new

family doctors to Acton, according to Angela Sugden-Praysner, Halton's physician recruitment officer.

"There's no one on the radar – no one looking seriously at Acton," Sugden-Praysner said last Thursday, adding the search continues.

There are three physicians seeing patients at the Acton Medical centre including Dr. Nather Alshakarji, who began seeing patients part-time following the August 2000 death of Dr. Brian Moore. He has developed a loyal full-time practice, helped open an after-hours walk-in clinic and is almost ready to open the new Acton Medical and Acute Care Medical Clinic. Other physicians seeing patients in Acton include Dr. Dhanya Jayalath and Dr. Ahmed Alkadhimi, who joined the practice last summer.

Sugden-Praysner said there are still incentives to attract new physicians to Acton including the Town's \$5,000 non-repayable grant and a \$10,000 no interest loan, payable over five years, providing the doctors agree to practice in Halton Hills for five years.

Georgetown Hospital has a separate incentive program that offers new physicians coming to Acton a \$10,000 relocation grant and an interest free loan of up to \$30,000. Halton Region doesn't offer any direct financial incentives, but it helps applicants opening or joining practices in under-served areas – like Halton Hills – apply for Ministry of Health grants of up to \$15,000, payable over three years and up to \$40,000 in tuition support.

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