

Local ambulance workers upgrade skills

All Whitby/Bowmanville Ambulance Service personnel recently received certification from the Oshawa General base hospital to perform cardiac monitoring and external cardiac defibrillation.

The certification has resulted in ambulance staff becoming reclassified to 'paramedic 1' status under the Ministry of Health emergency health services provincial advanced life support standards.

Cardiac monitor/defibrillator units are expected to be issued to the ambulance services in the near future. All Whitby and Bowmanville ambulance paramedics and those in the rest of Durham Region will be able to

monitor cardiac rhythms and, if required, administer a series of electrical 'shocks' in an attempt to restart a patient's heart.

Training for the advanced life support skill was given to all ambulance personnel in Durham Region in June and the early part of July at area hospitals.

The training was organized by Oshawa General base hospital coordinator Marty Epp and taught

by Oshawa Ambulance service paramedics. Staff were subsequently certified by Oshawa General base hospital physician Dr. Jim Shipley.

All 'paramedic 1' ambulance personnel will perform the new skill on strict protocols. Each monitor/defibrillator unit contains a medical control module that records all data such as time, cardiac rhythm number if

'shocks' given and time taken between 'shocks.'

This enables Oshawa General Hospital to audit all calls in which a patient is defibrillated (shocked) to ensure all paramedic level 1 staff conform to the protocols. The audit system is designed to ensure a high level quality assurance. Any situation in which a paramedic 1 varies from the protocols will be investigated and,

if required, a paramedic will be given a recertification course.

The acquisition of cardiac monitoring and defibrillation is the first level of advanced life support (paramedic) training and forms the basis for implementation of additional paramedic skills that are currently being evaluated in other areas of Ontario as to their effectiveness in the pre-hospital setting.

Volunteer groups applaud government

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concerns about the previous government's plan.

But, "we will certainly co-operate with the new government to address the issues it finds wrong with Bill 173," she said. Ireland applauds the new government for intending to explore ways of improving access, eliminating duplication of services and offering quality service at the "best" price.

"Those are good principles and we are certainly willing to work with them towards that."

Durham Centre MPP Jim Flaherty said his party's opposition to Bill 173 was based largely on how it would affect long-standing volunteer organizations.

"Our primary concern was the creation of a monolithic and bureaucratic agency to deal with the health needs of seniors and which excluded, for the most part, volunteers," said Flaherty.

"Funding for for-profit agencies was limited to 20 per cent and this limited VON, Red Cross and others. We felt that was wrong," he said.

"Organizations like VON have an important role to play."

While no doubt sharing Flaherty's assessment, David also noted that the decision means that - unlike the situation in other jurisdictions - the Durham Region District Health Council was not caught off guard.

She explained that district health councils in Ontario were advised to strike long-term care committees that would develop models for multi-service agencies in their communities.

But instead of taking a slow approach and consulting the public as the Durham council has done, some health councils were a little too quick to get going, David said.

"They went forth and found that the government had changed the rules after they started," she said. "What ours did was to go out and talk to focus groups. They didn't go charging ahead and then have to repeat everything."

"Health council executive director Lynda Hessey said several meetings were held across the region to receive input on Durham's future long-term care needs.

"We've not to date developed a specific model," said Hessey, "so if

there is a new direction, it (local model) can easily be adapted."

Hessey said no general consensus emerged during the consultation process, except for some concern about the number of multi-service agencies that might have been required.

"There really hasn't been any conclusions by the committee, but the feedback was to pay attention to local sensitivities, especially the difference between north and south particularly," she said.

From his discussions with health care providers and users, Flaherty said most feel that

long-term care services should be directed to the "home and community" rather than be hospital-based.

"I think there is a consensus on that. We can now work on what the exact model should look like."

Health ministry spokesperson Fran McBride said no multi-service agencies had been approved, although one was designated.

While Bill 173 can only be killed by a vote of the legislature, a halt to MSA planning does not require legislative approval, McBride added.

Community health projects funded

The Durham Region District Health Council (DHC) is accepting applications for 'Healthy Community' grants funding.

The program, funded and managed by the Ministry of Health, encourages people to take part in promoting health and develop workable ways to resolve problems that may affect health.

The range of issues that can affect health include basic needs (food, water, shelter, income, safety), physical environment,

lifestyle, a supportive social network and the economy.

Any community group may apply for the funding as long as an incorporated non-profit agency is designated to receive and manage project funds.

Proposals submitted to the Durham Region DHC should be for one-time funding of no more than \$10,000. An information session will be held on Aug. 10 to further explain the grants program.

Call the DHC at 433-4262 for more information.

what's on!

BIBLE SCHOOL
Children, aged 4 to those who have finished Grade 6, can join staff at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church for an Awesome Adventure July 31 to Aug. 4, 9 to 11:45 a.m. There will be songs, stories, snacks and crafts. Pre-register by calling 668-4022.

WRITERS CLUB
The Writers Club will meet on Monday, July 31, 7 to 9 p.m. at The Courtyard Pub, 109 Old Kingston Road, Pickering Village, for 'Poets in the Pub.' For more information or to be scheduled to read, call Terry Day at (905) 619-8872.

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PICNIC
A picnic in support and celebration of breastfeeding will be hosted by the Durham Region Health Department and the Durham Region Breastfeeding Coalition on Aug. 2, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Rotary Park, Brock Street South in Whitby. For more information, call the Durham Health Connection at 723-8521 or 686-2740.

POOL PARTY
The Durham Home Business Association is holding its first annual barbecue/pool party at 8 Greenview Court, Whitby, on Saturday, July 29. There will be pool games, food, a raffle, door prizes, most outrageous clothing contest. Festivities run from 1 to 5 p.m. The rain date is July 30. For more information, call Keith Camacho at 723-8419.

GARDEN PARK
On July 30 and Aug. 13, staff at the Scugog Shores Museum Village will host a Victorian Garden Party. Tea sandwiches, desserts and beverages will be served. Finish off the afternoon with a tour of the restored period home. Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased at the Scugog Chamber of Commerce or the museum. The museum is located on Island Road, north of Hwy. 7A, two kilometres east of Port Perry. For more information or to reserve your ticket, contact 905-985-3589.

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