

Party platforms on Health Care Issues

Progressive Conservative Party

1. We will invest \$28 billion into health care this year, almost half the total provincial budget. Altogether, we've increased annual funding by more than \$10 billion.
2. We will invest \$1 billion in the Cancer Care Institute of Ontario. Since 1995, we've spent more than \$2.5 billion for cancer services.
3. We will invest \$14.5 million over two years to create a Children's Health Network, linking all children's hospitals in Ontario to share resources, knowledge and capabilities to provide the best possible health care for our children.
4. We have made an unprecedented \$1.2 billion investment into community care services.
5. We have expanded emergency room capacity in Ontario hospitals by nearly two million patient visits, from 3.5 million to 5.4 million per year.
6. We will finance the location of at least 20,000 new beds in nursing homes and homes for the aged. It is the largest increase in Ontario's history.

Liberal Party

1. We will pass a Commitment to Medicare Act that will make universal, public medicare the law in Ontario. Under our plan two-tier medicare will be illegal in Ontario.
2. We will expand MRI and CT services in the public system to provide better access for everyone.
3. We will take pressure off our hospitals so you will not have to wait long hours in overcrowded emergency rooms for necessary care.
4. We will ensure there are more family doctors in communities across Ontario. We will remove barriers preventing well-qualified foreign-trained physicians from practising in Ontario.
5. We will help under-served communities attract and retain doctors and health care professionals.
6. We will expand protection for Ontarians who use non-traditional medicine.

New Democratic Party

1. We will fight to make sure the Liberals in Ottawa pay their fair share and guarantee every health-care dollar goes to patients, not profits or tax cuts.
2. We will cancel the expansion of private, for-profit diagnostic MRI and CT 'scans for cash' and redirect the funding to public health care for better care at less cost.
3. We will attract and keep our health professionals by reducing medical tuition, creating more full-time nursing and nurse practitioner positions and creating more nurse-friendly environments.
4. We will act quickly for fairness and to relieve the doctor shortage by streamlining the training and accreditation of qualified internationally-trained physicians.
5. We will guarantee accountability with a Health Care Standards Commissioner, Patients' Bill of Rights and whistleblower protection.
6. We will get back to the job of helping people maintain their health in the first place - not just treating the sick - by introducing an ambitious preventive health plan, including a comprehensive tobacco-control strategy.

Councillor Post concerned about "123" house plan

by KAI HULSHOF
The Independent

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Cramahe council is caught between a rock and a hard space, and at least one councillor thinks that space is too small.

The space in question is a large, looming facility located at 123 King Street East in Colborne, known locally as "the 123 house."

At its September 2 council meeting, council was approached by Kevin O'Gorman and his wife Heather, the owners of the property for the last three years. They wish to "maintain the existing institutional zoning, but add in an additional permit to allow self-contained multi-residential units."

The O'Gorman's hope to turn the building into 29 self-contained apartment units and allow for institutional uses, including a dining room, kitchen and cafeteria for tenant guests. But, time is running out. The O'Gorman's also plan to access time-sensitive federal funding.

"I'm not here pointing fin-

gers," said Kevin O'Gorman. "I need to know one way or another what the decision will be. I can't go on carrying two places."

About a dozen local residents voiced their concerns at the meeting. They said that the proposal leaves too much room for negative development in their "backyards".

Leaving the zoning as institutional would allow the building to be used as a group home or an undesirable apartment building. Additionally, not all the apartments have kitchens, there is no wheelchair access or handicap facilities and the plans show no parking details.

According to the O'Gorman's plans, the apartments average 220 square feet of floor space, significantly less than the minimum 398.28 square feet required for a bachelor apartment under municipal by-laws.

The size of the apartments would require Cramahe council to change the by-law, therefore allow-

ing smaller apartment sizes to be rented. This makes councillor Tim Post uncomfortable.

"The major concern I have is the size of the rooms," he said. "If we allow this particular situation to exist, we would be hard pressed to turn down the next application."

Many residents fear that the building won't attract seniors. They feel the spaces are too small. As a result, with the zoning left wide open, anything could be possible.

"I have a concern that it might turn into a group home," said Pete Bradford, a Colborne resident.

"If he can't attract seniors, and that's my concern, then it turns into less-than-desirable accommodations," said Post. "And I can't imagine many seniors who would want to be warehoused that way."

Conversely, if council turns down the application, the property will be sold or simply deteriorate even more than it already has, said O'Gorman.