

County considers Colborne ambulance case

By CECILIA NASMITH
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A ride in an ambulance may end up in a surprised destination, a Cramahe Township woman told county council last week.

Asking to address the meeting, Doreen Clark described a mid-June ambulance ride as a nightmare.

Only a week earlier, she'd been forced to call for an ambulance at 1:30 a.m. Though she had every light in her house on, the ambulance stopped down the street. She went out on her verandah to call for them, but they couldn't hear her over the fire truck and their radios. She had to walk out to her own ambulance.

Mrs. Clark had assumed she was going to Northumberland Hills Hospital, since that's where her doctor and her records were located, but she ended up in Trent Hills.

"Do you get to go to your own hospital?" Mrs. Clark wondered. "Do you have a choice of where you go, or do you have to go wherever anybody takes

you?"

Director of emergency medical services Dan Collins said the matter is under investigation, and council will receive a report.

"But yes, a patient does have a choice — depending on dispatch approval," Mr. Collins said. "Dispatch are the ones who control deployment of resources. Ultimately, it's their call."

"Mrs. Clark is not alone," Alnwick-Haldimand Township Mayor Bill Finley said. "We are the cross-over between Campbellford and Cobourg (hospital) catchment areas, and I have had two families come to me and say, 'My doctor's in Cobourg, I deal in Cobourg, but when the ambulance came, they took me to Trent Hills,'" he related. "The next day, they had to move on to Cobourg hospital."

"I certainly think this is something that should be looked at. Especially in this gray area, it's important that (ambulance personnel) talk with them and find out where is the area they need to be taken," Mr. Finley said.

"Otherwise, the knowledge and expertise they need may not be available."

From the front page

Colborne patient winds up in Trenton

Mrs. Clark wonders if patients have a choice in where they are taken. She feels that what is done should be what's best for the patient, not what's best for the system. She knows it's closer to the Cobourg hospital on the 401 than to Trenton. She was sitting waiting on the curb and coherent when the ambulance arrived, but wasn't asked where she wanted to go.

Where you go depends on the Lindsay-based dispatcher, says Northumberland County's Director of Emergency Services, Dan Collins.

If the patient is stable, she can request a hospital. Her request is then passed on to the dispatcher. The dispatcher must decide that the remaining ambulances can provide emergency coverage while hers is taking her to the

hospital of choice.

That would seem to support Mrs. Clark's warning to patients that they may not go where they think they are going.

In Mrs. Clark's case, her doctor has advised her to call him first next time, and not to take a chance with the ambulance.

She thinks it might be better to take a taxi.

Cramahe gets new website

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The Community section lists libraries, churches and clubs.

Under the Economic Development drop-down menu there are maps, a business directory by category and links for companies with websites of their own. Anyone who's business is not on the list can call the Township and have it added.

At some point they hope to have commercial and industrial listings in this section.

The Colborne Creek development is readily accessible. There are pages of photos of the interiors and exteriors of the homes, as well as brochures and layouts.

Interested in finding out about area festivals? The Apple Blossom Tyme Festival, Trash 'n' Treasures, Rural Ramble, the Holiday Gift Tour and Santa Claus Parade are there.

In the Tourism and Heritage section there is a map and soon there will be walking and driving tours. Local and area

accommodation can be found there too. The Keeler Centre will soon join attractions, shops, churches, and the Waterfront Trail.

It has taken close to 200 hours to design, and build the new site which will cost the Township about \$2,500 to \$3,000 when it is done.

Township Councillor Marc Coombs stated last week that the money to fund the project has come out of the Township's 2005 budget. Originally those monies were allocated to pay for a final report from the Economic Development Advisory Committee. But funding was received from the Eastern Ontario Development Fund for that.

The grant allowed the Township to move the website updating forward.

Where to?

Colborne patient winds up in Trenton

Colborne Chronicle

By BOB OWEN
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Severe abdominal cramps during the night of June 28 forced Colborne's Doreen Clark to make a 1:00 a.m. call for an ambulance. She didn't get what she expected.

Mrs. Clark is a patient of a doctor with privileges in the Northumberland Hills Hospital and all her records are there.

When she realized that she needed medical attention she considered driving herself, then thought better of it. The pain was too great.

She didn't expect to be taken to Trenton Hospital, nor did she expect it to take until 2 a.m. to get there. When she did, there were no records of the ailment which she has had treated on previous occasions.

As Doreen says, they didn't need to take x-rays or ultrasound. Her doctor has already done that. The whole experience was "one real nightmare."