

District Health Council executive director

Perhaps it's a lucky thing that Halton Health Council's first executive director is a former general, given that some regional councillors have been on the warpath recently. (They'd like to see the Health Council abolished, or at least conquered.)

But William Leonard, who was appointed executive director in April, isn't worried. "I don't mind the give and take and the cut and thrust of people who don't like us," he said in a recent interview.

"There is some lack of understanding of what the Health Council is designed to do and how it goes about its business."

According to Mr. Leonard, the responsibility of the Council is to take a region-wide view of health matters in Halton. Its functions are to identify health problems in the community, to coordinate health care services, to advise on deployment of resources and to plan for the overall delivery of health care.

"The Council is assisted in its tasks by a committee structure which is made up of health professionals and consumers of health care."

The Health Council was set up a year ago. Membership was selected by a steering committee formed by the Ministry of Health in co-operation with the region. Three regional councillors sit on the Health Council.

"I find it hard to believe that through all this the

regional government didn't know what was going on," commented Mr. Leonard.

Mr. Leonard views his role as a full time staff officer to the Health Council and its chairman. He will be responsible for the day-to-day co-ordination of the council's activities. In addition he will be the link between council and its committees.

The new executive director comes to his job with a 36 year background in the military but with no ex-

perience in health care services. "I don't think it's a handicap," he said. "It may be a help."

From his military background he brings experience in planning and in managing large resources.

Mr. Leonard retired from the Canadian Armed Forces with the rank of major-general. He has spent the last six years in Germany and Belgium. From 1971 to 1974 he was commander of the Canadian forces in Europe.

Most recently he was a senior staff officer at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

In his new role Mr. Leonard will be responsible to the Halton District Health Council. "I am not a civil servant," he said. "I am paid by the Health Council and I'm responsible to the Council, not to the Ministry."

"You have to present a chapter and verse and a reasoned approach."

"I doubt we'll change government policies very quickly, but that doesn't mean we're not going to try," he concluded.

In the hope of improving working relationships with regional government and establishing contact with the public Mr. Leonard is in the process of setting up a series of public meetings in Milton, Georgetown and Acton in October. Three speakers will present the points of view of the Health Council, the Ministry of Health and the

community. Time will be set aside for a discussion from the floor.

Mr. Leonard is hoping for a large public turnout to these meetings and is interested to see how the public will respond. Dates for the meetings will be publicized.

Homeless until June of this year, the Halton District Health Council has opened offices at 2324 Trafalgar Rd. in Oakville. Mr. Leonard and his secretary, the Council's only full-time employees, have headquarters there.



William Leonard

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