

VON calls for more funding to heal sickly deficit

The Halton branch of the Victorian Order of Nurses, with services that grew by 28 per cent in Halton Hills last year, is operating at a deficit that could triple next year if provincial funding is not increased.

The Halton VON was \$50,000 short in its 1988-89 fiscal budget. If present financial constraints continue, the local VON will be \$150,000 in the red next year.

Nurses with the VON presently get 80 per cent of a \$27.90 hourly rate, making them "the lowest paid professional nurses in Halton Region," according to executive

director Carolyn Milne. Mrs. Milne said the hourly rate applies to nursing care, documentation of charts and communication with other health care members. But she added that the hourly wage is really a flat rate. Nurses often work beyond the hour, for free, she said.

Although the provincial Ministry of Health promised to kick in \$2.5 million to clear up the deficit in the VON's 33 branches across Ontario, Mrs. Milne said the increase would not meet operating costs.

The Halton VON is asking for a 9.3 per cent increase to meet with its growing list of patients and

their growing needs. The VON committee that will meet with Health Minister Elinor Caplan next week will ask for a seven-per cent increase for its 33 branches.

The need for VON services has grown faster in Halton Hills than any other part of the Region last year. There were 5,010 visits in fiscal year 1987-88. There were 6,428 visits in 1988-89.

The VON is a "labor-intensive" service that has been in operation nationally for the past 92 years. While the costs across the Region are presently \$27.73 per hour, the

VON projects a needed increase to \$28.61 by the end of January.

Needs for services in Halton Region have increased by 50 per cent in the last two years, said Mrs. Milne. The average care time has increased by two minutes and \$50,000 in labor in the last 10 years.

"The base (increase) has to be adjusted to reflect the complex care and the acute care that has come to the community," said Mrs. Milne.

"It is important to note that not only has the absolute number of home nursing visits grown at a

rapid pace, but the care needs of individuals have also increased in complexity and acuity."

Mrs. Milne said that the provincial government has been underfunding the VON since 1986. Increases to the branches have barely met inflation, she said.

"The Halton VON will not cut services presently offered to its 1,300 patients if financial needs are not met, but will stop taking more complex cases that require more time and greater care.

Mrs. Milne said a funding base for the VON is "the most important issue" facing the nurses group.

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Worker for handicapped killed in auto accident

A 48-year-old handicapped worker in Georgetown was killed in a car crash west of Hornby early Tuesday morning.

Margaret McCandless, a director with the North Halton Association for the Developmentally Handicapped, was killed Tuesday morning after a truck with apparently failing brakes struck her car at the intersection of Steel's Avenue and the James Snow Parkway around 8:30 a.m. She was pronounced dead later that day at Sunnybrook Medical Centre in Toronto.

Mrs. McCandless, a Milton resident, spent the last three years working at the centre for the developmentally handicapped on Park Avenue in Georgetown. She began there in 1986 as a team residential leader and became Interim Children's Service Director in August 1988.

She also spent 13 years working at a now closed developmental centre in Milton and worked as a volunteer at the Tinker Bell Nursery for Physically and Mentally Handicapped Children in Milton.

"She was very involved," said Etta Mills, executive director at the Georgetown centre for the handicapped. "She was very popular and a very caring person."

"She will be badly missed by her friends and staff."

Mrs. McCandless was a single parent with five children. In addition to her work with the handicapped, she worked with young offenders and participated in sports events in Milton with her sons.

A date for the funeral had not been set as of Thursday.

The driver of the truck that struck Mrs. McCandless' 1985 Pontiac is a Niagara Falls man, 33. Halton Regional Police say an investigation into the collision that also involved a third car, continues with the Regional Traffic Bureau.

"On the road again"



On the Road again! Kindergarten to Grade two students surround Acton Village Constable Bill Riddle, who was at the St. Joseph's School May 11 to give the kids some helpful hints on bicycle safety. The second annual event is put on by the Halton Roman Catholic School Board's Parent Teacher Association as a way of preparing the kids for the upcoming bike season. Besides learning the rules of the road the children had their bicycles thoroughly inspected. They then participated in a pylon course complete with yield and stop signs. Children in Grades five to eight were taken on a four kilometre bike ride through Acton. To participate, the children needed their parents' approval and about half of the school took part in the event. (Herald photo by Ben Dummett)

Willow Park residents seek relocation OK

Residents of the Willow Park trailer homes in Norval are seeking public support for a new location in Acton.

The 29-trailer park on Highway 7 lies in a flood plain protected by the Credit Valley Conservation Authority. Last year, the CVCA gave the group until September 1988 to move. The eviction date has been extended until next November.

Trailer park operators Dianne and Chris Mills announced Thursday that Willow Park residents are "pleased" with a potential location at the Nor Halton Park on Regional Road 12 southwest of Acton on land owned by Merv and Doris Barber.

The trailer park residents will hold a public meeting May 23 at the Town of Halton Hills council chamber to get public input on the new park location.

"We'd like to get the new property on the go (but) nothing can be done until the public hearing," said

Mr. Mills.

The Nor Halton Park location is the only one brought before town council, although other locations were suggested, said the Mills. Willow Park has sat in the valley between Norval and Georgetown since 1954, they say.

"We want people to realize there are families living here," said Mrs. Mills. "We're people, just like everyone else."

Although the present trailer park is located in a flood plain, the Mills say there have been no major flooding problems. They say seven years ago there were 18 inches of water when Mountainview Road collapsed near Cedarvale Park, but "that began at 6 a.m. and was over by 12 o'clock," said Mr. Mills.

The new property proposed for the trailer park is not treed and does not have a river running through it, but the Mills say they are prepared to call it home if public opinion allows.

Watchtower work delayed

Approval for the expansion of a 172-acre Watchtower Bible and Tract Society property will face delays until Halton Region tests the site for adequate water.

The society, located on Highway 7 in Georgetown, applied to the Town of Halton Hills recently for a rezoning bylaw that would allow expansion of its residential and administration facilities.

The Watchtower group plans to expand their existing zoning from 65 to 85 acres of the property. And although complaints from surrounding residents have been dealt with by the society, there is a holding bylaw on the property until water can be tested.

"The Region has identified a reserved capacity," said town engineer Bruce MacLean. He said that while the Region is testing on-site at Watchtower, the society could use water on a "borrowing basis."

But Georgetown Coun. Anne Currie said the town's review of the Watchtower application shows the town favors approving the application.

"It's sort of a tentative approval based on finding the water," she said. Coun. Currie suggested the town "forget the whole thing" until water studies are conducted.

But a lawyer representing the Watchtower group said the society wants to "get on with our building."

"There's water in the area," said Glen How. He added that the group "would like to have the bylaws proposed, approved."

The Watchtower application will be handled with other applications for water hook-up submitted to the Region, said Mr. MacLean.

Mayor Russ Miller said the water is available for the site, "it's just how we go about getting it," he said.

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