

VON will get 4.6 per cent more - deficit covered

After a month of talks with the Ministry of Health, the Victorian Order of Nurses in Ontario will get a 4.6 per cent budget increase that will trickle down into the Halton VON budget.

The VON, a 92-year-old nurses group, has services that grew by 28 per cent in Halton Hills last year.

The VON found itself in the red by \$2.5 million across its 33 branches in Ontario for the fiscal year 1988-89. Halton's deficit was \$50,000, while the provincial government agreed to cover these costs for the previous year, new costs had to be met, said Halton

VON executive director Carolyn Milne.

Without government increases in funding, the VON could triple its deficit by next year, she said.

The province agreed to give the VON a 4.6 per cent increase for 1988-89 which includes a "provision for salary enhancement," said Mrs. Milne.

"Both sides have met regularly to resolve the problem," she said of the VON members meeting with Health Minister Elinor Caplan.

"With the settlement we anticipate, we will be able to meet the deficit," she said.

VON nurses were the lowest paid nurses in the Region in May before the increase was granted. The nurses received 80 per cent of an hourly \$27.73. This cost did not cover the cost of treating increasingly-complex cases, said Mrs. Milne. The "real cost" of VON services was estimated at \$28.61 an hour.

The base rate for VON care for the fiscal year 1989-90 will be \$29.94 an hour, up from the \$28.61 figure. This will mean nurses will make almost \$24 per hour. But Mrs. Milne emphasized that each paid hour can really be up to several

hours work. The hour wage is a "flat rate," she said.

The government will contribute over \$500,000 to "special funding" for the VON, which will be for patient classification costs, caseload planning, and "quality" developments.

"We feel really quite confident that as long as our volume projections are accurate, we should do just fine," said Mrs. Milne.

The volume Mrs. Milne refers to is the over 6,400 VON visits that took place last year. A reduction in

visits would mean the same costs for overhead but less revenue for the organization. This could put the VON back into a deficit position, she said. But the trend indicates that needs for services have grown by 50 per cent in Halton Region in the last two years. The VON threatened in May to stop taking new patients if funding requirements were not met by the Ministry of Health. The reduction would not have affected the Region's 1,300 VON patients.

Exact budget figures for the Halton VON branch should be available in the next two weeks.

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Hardware store meets stiff resistance from Fourth Line residents

Fourth Line residents strongly opposed a 10,000 square-foot hardware store proposed for six acres of land north of Limehouse at a public meeting held Monday night.

The Town of Halton Hills council chambers were crowded with residents, many of them from Fourth Line, who were represented by local resident Wally Selihar.

Mr. Selihar said the hardware store proposed by Michael Kinal, who owns a hardware and jewelry store in Acton, would be located on land presently farmed, by Limehouse cash cropper Frank Anthony.

"This is not the proper place to put a large industrial development," said Mr. Selihar to councillors and the public gallery.

He said residents in Halton Hills do not want development, but rather came here for the "country setting."

Mr. Kinal was represented by local realtor Dave Whiting. Mr. Whiting said the Fourth Line location would not have access from Highway 7 if approved by the town, and would not be a "high impact site."

But Mr. Selihar argued that if approval were given to the hardware store, more industry would follow in the area.

"Is this the wedge that opens the door to future expansion?" asked Mr. Selihar. "I do get a little nervous when I look at the scale of the property."

But Mr. Whiting said there was "no intention to have a plaza or anything larger" on site.

The 6.2 acres will house an almost 10,000-square foot building if approved for rezoning by town councillors.

Speaking from the audience, Mr. Kinal said the increased space would allow him to continue his hardware operation in a more comfortable setting. He said bicycles could be removed from their present location on the ceiling, allowing buyers to "kick the tires."

And wheelbarrows would no longer have to be stacked up, he said.

The Fourth Line location was chosen for financial reasons, said Mr. Whiting. Town planner Glen Wellings said the location is outside Acton's urban area.

But Mr. Selihar said Mr. Kinal's financial issues are not a concern to residents. Their concerns in-

clude vandals, burglars and increased road traffic brought on by a large store near their homes.

"We would be very naive at this point to believe that the only people this would attract is people from the Acton area," Mr. Selihar said.

He added that there are several places in Acton to purchase lumber.

But Charles Kinal said, "there is only one place in Acton where you can buy a two-by-four (inch piece of wood)."

The town will consider the hardware store application and town staff will recommend to councillors whether or not they agree with a rezoning for the property at Fourth Line and Highway 7.

Outbreak of measles misses Halton Hills

An outbreak of measles in Halton's schools has not spread its way north to Halton Hills. Regional health commissioner Graham Pollett said Wednesday.

But Dr. Pollett said there is a "significant outbreak" in the rest of the Region, particularly Oakville and Milton. Oakville has a reported 45 cases, with a suspected origin from the Caribbean, where one student was vacationing. Milton's 10 cases are believed to have spread from a student vacationing in Quebec where there is a measles epidemic.

One case is reported in Burlington.

"It's one of the most highly contagious communicable diseases known," Dr. Pollett said of the outbreak of Red and German measles. Usually, the red spots ap-

pear and the disease is gone several days later, but in extreme cases, the victim can develop encephalitis, a swelling of the brain that can cause brain damage.

And Dr. Pollett added that most children, who caught the disease had already been immunized. The Region has re-vaccinated over 1,100 children at five schools. Dr. Pollett said those vaccinated before 1980 could be in danger of catching the measles.

But he added "we hope that with school soon to end, this outbreak will also come to an end."

The vaccine is only recommended for schools where there is a "cluster of outbreaks."

So far, there are no reported cases of a measles outbreak in Halton Hills.



Batter up

Seniors gathered at the Bennett Health Care Centre in Georgetown recently to participate in a balloon launching and play a little baseball. The seniors were kicking off Nursing Home Week June 19 to 24. This lady took a mighty swing but she fouled off a tricky curve ball, as onlookers enjoy the next best thing to watching the Blue Jays. (Herald photo)

Nurses achieve wage parity

Halton Region's nurses settled a contract this week that will give them wage parity with hospital nurses.

The two-year deal, retroactive to April 1, will mean a 6.3 per-cent increase over last year for year one and a 5.9 per-cent increase for 1990-91.

The Ontario Nurses Association Local 1 ratified the contract Monday that will affect 72 full-time and 16 part-time registered and public health nurses working for the Region.

Registered nurses will get \$19.53 an hour in 1989-90 fiscal year and \$20.02 an hour in 1990-91. Salaries for public health nurses will increase to \$19.92 for 1989-90 and to

\$21.03 for 1990-91. Regional commissioner of human resources Greg Hughes, said Wednesday that through the new contract Regional nurses have "achieved full wage parity" with their counterparts working in hospitals.

The Region's registered and public health nurses perform immunizations, work at schools, conduct pre-natal classes, and provide home care for the elderly who have been discharged from hospital, said Mr. Hughes.

The pay scale will also change along with the wages, he said. Where there are now seven pay levels, there will be eight for 1989, and nine for the 1990-91 fiscal year.

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