Community-Drug Abuse Centre may close

By BEN DUMMETT the Herald

Georgetown's Drug Abuse Centre may be forced to close its doors because of a lack of funding, according to Halton's Commissioner of Social Services, Bonnie Ewart.

Ms. Ewart said Monday the centre has indicated the \$4,800 the Region's Health and Social Services Committee recommended Saturday the drug rehabilitation centre be granted, will be insufficient to keep it operating over the long term.

The agency had requested \$4,800 base funding - Regional monies the group would receive on an annual basis, adjusted for the inflation rate - plus a one-time funding grant of \$4,600 said Ms. Ewart.

According to a staff report, the Region is concerned whether funding should be granted since the groups is having difficulty obtaining provincial funding and there are other larger and more established drug preventive and rehabilitation services in the Region.

Committee decided Saturday on a one-time grant of \$4,800 be allotted to give the centre more time to find alternative funding.

If provincial funding is not forthcoming in 1991/92 the centre may have to close, according to a staff report.



Bonnie Ewart

No representative from the centre could be reached at press

Before Saturday's meeting, the Health and Social Services Committee approved grant money totalling \$670,000 be allocated amongst 47 community agencies in Halton. Saturday's meeting centred on requests from groups for additional grant money totallin \$80,000. The committee only approved \$18,000, in extra grants.

Aside from the drug abuse cen-

tre, other Halton Hills-based agencies to apply for money included; Acton Social Services and Information Centre (ASSIC), the Halton Hills Branch of St. John's Ambulance and the North Halton Literacy Guild.

ASSIC will receive an extra \$2,500 on top of the \$36,897 the agency has already received for this year. ASSIC applied for just over \$5,000.

The additional money is needed to cover a cash flow shortfall, said ASSIC Executive Director Peggie Balkind. She attributed the shortfall to the Region changing its budget year from Jan. to Dec. to March to April.

Only able to cover half of the shortfall puts ASSIC in a precarious position, but Ms. Balkind said existing services will be maintained.

Ms. Ewart said Regional funding this year will only help Halton's community agencies maintain existing levels of service. More than likely there will be no expansion, she said. Ultimately, however, the fate of each agency will depend on the province, since it provides social service groups with the bulk of the funding, explained Ms. Ewart.

Committee denied St. John's. Ambulance request for an additional \$6,618. Earlier this year the ambulance service was granted

According to a Regional staff report, the additional money is needed to hire a new staff person. However, the report indicates the service isn't used enough to justify another paid staff member.

A representative for the service couldn't be reached for comment at press time.

The North-Halton Literacy Guild was also denied its request. The guild applied for \$2,000, but the Committee didn't support it saying provincial funding would appear to be more appropriate for such a service.

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Issue raised on HIV virus in waste water

There is no possibility of the Human Immunedeficiency Virus, (HIV), surviving for any length of time in water originating from sewage treatment plants, says Halton Regional Medical Health

Officer, Dr. Robert Nosal. According to Milton Regional councillor Bill Johnson, there is a video, produced out of Australia, which reports the opposite. Mr. Johnson expressed concern last Wednesday that if the HIV virus could survive in water from a sewage treatment plant it still couldn't be contracted by those handling the water. The HIV virus has the potential to transform into full blown AIDS -Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

There are two Regional waste water treatment plants in Halton Hills, one in Georgetown located at Silver Creek and the other in Acton at Black Creek.

Although Dr. Nosal said he is unfamiliar with the video, he said there is no way the HIV virus

could be contracted by someone handling waste water.

The HIV virus may have been detected in waste water but there is no risk to public health, he stressed.

The HIV virus is transmitted through blood, sexual activities or breast feeding, said Dr. Nosal. However, in the case of someone handling waste water with an open cut, Dr. Nosal said, the visus could never be contracted.

Describing the HIV virus as "very fragile," Dr. Nosal explained "the virus doesn't survive well outside the body."









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