the HERALD

North Halton lacks mental health and addiction services

The North-Halton area, comprised of Georgetown, Acton and Milton, lacks sufficient mental health and addiction services to adequately service the community, according to a Halton District Health Council report on the subject, scheduled to go before Halton Regional Council today (Wednesday).

Specifically there needs to be more housing for mental health patients and improved psychiatric detoxification services for North Halton, indicates the report.

The report focuses on the existing mental health and addiction services throughout the Region and suggests several recommendations on how the services in these two health care areas can be improved.

HDHC Executive Director Marlene Longdon said during an interview Friday, Georgetown, Acton and Milton all need housing that is staffed 24-hours-a-day for mentally ill patients. Acknowledging this type of housing already exists in Acton, Ms.

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Longdon explained a wider range of housing is needed.

The homes in Acton are institutional in design, meaning, for example, several people sleep in a large room.

Comparatively, Halton's southern municipalities -Oakville and Burlington - have a variety of housing types, including townhouses and apartments, said Ms. Longdon.

These types of housing provide

patients with an environment which is more similar to a home environment, she added.

An application has been submitted to both Ontario Munistries of Housing and Health for funding to build the required housing Georgetown, Milton and Acton need. Ms. Longdon predicted some of the funding would be fortheoming, but not enough to establish housing in all three communities.

The report's findings and recommendations are based on responses to questionnaires sent out to social service agencies, family physicians and counselling services.

The report recommends formal arrangements be made between North-Halton based family physicians, and Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, and Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital in Burlington allowing the doctors to access the hospitals' psychiatric services when treating patients in time of crisis.

North-Halton also needs access to a detoxification centre. Currently people in need of the service living in North-Halton are required to travel to either Toronto or Hamilton, said Ms. Longdon.

North-Halton has a recovery centre, but not a detoxification centre, she said.



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