

Situation Critical

There's absolutely nothing 'golden' about being a senior citizen without a place to call home.

In Ontario, one of the most vulnerable segments of our population is being made to feel like a burden on society.

Frequently dumped on a health-care system that simply isn't equipped to deal with their numbers, many frail seniors that need long-term care are being forced to wait—on average for more than three and a half months or 109 days—before being placed in one of more than 600 government-funded homes.

Now online at www.independentfreepress.com is the first in a four-part Metroland investigative series—title Situation Critical—about the growing crisis in long-term care.

While a recent provincial initiative to care for more seniors through improved home support was supposed to alleviate the pressure on hospitals and long-term care homes, the number of seniors on waiting list has more than doubled to 25,000 since 2005, while the average provincial wait time for a nursing home bed has skyrocketed from 49 to 109 days since 2007.

Then, when long-term care spaces do become available, less than 40 per cent of Ontario seniors are being placed in their first choice of homes.

Inefficient systems for placing seniors from hospitals to long-term care facilities are being blamed for further exacerbating an already dismal situation.

Making matters worse, across the province there's no consistency in the way hospitals are treating Ontario seniors awaiting the rare opening at a long-term care facility.

If a society can truly be judged on the way it treats its elders, Ontario should be ashamed.

People who have worked hard all their lives, dutifully paid their taxes and have contributed their time and talents toward the betterment of society deserve a chance to live out their final years in the community they call home.

Anything less deprives a significant portion of our population from the right to be treated with respect and to live out their final days in dignity.



THE POT CALLS THE KETTLE BLACK...
Steve Nease

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WEB POLL RESULTS

The world's biggest sporting event—soccer's World Cup—kicked off last week. How would you rate your interest in the month-long tournament?

- I am very interested and will watch as many games as I can (26%)
- I am somewhat interested and will watch some matches (23%)
- Watch soccer? You must be kidding! (51%)

Go to www.independentfreepress.com

Letters to the editor

Director defends Region's record

Dear editor,
 As the Director of Economic Development for Halton Region, I would like to respond to Mr. David McNally's June 7 letter to the editor (Region 'ruining' Halton Hills). The information provided by Mr. McNally contained several inaccuracies.

Halton Region has one of the most impressive job creation records in Ontario. In addition, Halton is making a record investment in infrastructure spending, with \$362 million this year alone. We have more than doubled our roads construction budget from \$65 million in 2006 to \$132.2 million in 2010. In 2006 Halton taxpayers paid 49% of these costs, and currently only pay 18%, with the remaining 82% being paid by development charges.

As Mr. McNally would know, development charges are intended to ensure that new growth pays for the new infrastructure (e.g., water) required to service it. Halton's Regional Council wants to ensure that taxpayers are not burdened with the cost of growth. Indeed, over the last four years, the combined tax impact for Regional programs and services

has been less than 0.5%—resulting in a tax cut, and therefore one of the lowest among municipalities in Canada.

We are very much open for business. We are seeing continued non-residential growth with new buildings on the Highway 401 Corridor through Halton Hills and Milton.

In Halton Hills, Dover Flour and PL Foods Limited have announced expansion plans. Regional Council has approved \$80.9 million of interim financing to front-end the costs of water and wastewater servicing in key employment areas such as the Halton Hills 401 Corridor. We are planning for Halton's future economic development through the designation of 1,100 hectares of new employment lands, including a near doubling of the Halton Hills 401 Corridor through Regional Official Plan Amendment 38 (Sustainable Halton). As a Halton Hills land developer, Mr. McNally would know that the continued development of the Halton Hills 401 Corridor adds to the town's tax base and supports community investment in the town.

Halton Region's Economic Development Strategy is working, for Halton Hills, and for Halton Region.

*John Davidson,
 Director, Economic Development*

CASHh staff thanked

Dear editor,
 I want to thank all the volunteer drivers from Cancer Assistance Services-Halton Hills. Without them I would never have got to Princess Margaret Hospital to complete my six weeks of radiation.

Thanks a million to the guys and girls for your dedication to your job. Also, in the office, where it all starts, a big thank you to the staff for organizing those same drivers to help cancer patients to get well.

A very big thank you to all.
Eric Baker, Georgetown

Plant sale a success

Dear editor,
 Thank you Georgetown for making the recent Georgetown Horticultural Society plant sale and silent auction our most successful ever.

This year marks the Society's 90th anniversary. One of the original goals of the Society was the beautification of Georgetown.

In keeping with this goal, the Society is renewing the Mary Street Parkette. Funds raised from the sale help to support this multi-year endeavour.

Dorinne Wagner, president

Letters to the editor policy

Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length. Publication is not guaranteed.

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