

372 Queen Street, Acton • 519-853-9292 • 333 Mountainview Road South, Georgetown • 905-873-3103 www.eramosaphysio.com



THE FIRST STEP TO RESTORING YOUR SMILE

Joshua Kelly, DD Denturist

Dean's Award 2008 FREE Consultations

> 360 Guelph Street, Unit 40 289-924-1378 www.haltonhillsdentures.ca

NEWS theifp.ca

SAVIS weighs in on 'unfounded' sexual assault rate in Halton

Continued from page 1)

"SAVIS has always had a good relationship with the police," SAVIS executive director Alma Arguello told the Independent. "Having said that, now we're rebuilding our relationship with the sexual assault unit."

False allegations of sexual assault are not common. What is common is survivors and victims not being believed or supported when they divulge their experiences and for the victim to know the offender. It is also common for sexual cases to most often scrutinize survivors and victims, their actions, and their reputability as witnesses.

"There's obviously an issue, otherwise I wouldn't have a wait list of victim sexual assault and sexual violence happening in Halton," Arguello said. "To what extent? I don't have the liberty to say, but there has been some issues where the victims have felt unheard and they're not being taken seriously and not being believed."

According to Arguello, assistance is needed when it comes to sexual violence.

"We have a lot of work to do," she said. "If you get raped in Acton, you have to walk into an emergency room, say you need a rape kit, and go to Burlington. You get put in a cab. There has to be a better way. There has to be more awareness about sexual assault, sexual violence and sexual exploitation."

SAVIS believes police services have an important role in supporting victims of crime. The organization met with the Hal-

ton Regional Police Service (HRPS) on Feb. 9 to discuss ways of bringing down the unfounded rate in the region. Such ways include training officers on trauma interviewing and keeping the victims feeling supported during the difficult time.

In response to the Globe's article, Halton police will begin reviewing unfounded cases from 2010 and working its way up to 2016.

"We pride ourselves in being victimcentred, and ensuring that we support all victims of crime, and that priority can never be higher than in the case of sexual assault offences," said Halton Police Sgt Barry Malciw.

SAVIS is the only sexual assault centre in all of Halton and having a relationship with the police would be extremely beneficial, Arguello said.

"All of us in our community have a responsibility, and it doesn't just fall to the police and it doesn't just fall to SAVIS," Arguello said. "We all have a responsibility to be able to provide a space for survivors of sexual violence to feel safe."

SAVIS is a small organization with a big mission, Arguello said, and getting the awareness out is of high importance.

"Sexual assault and sexual violence has no ethnicity and has no boundaries," Arguello said. "Our kids need to be educated."

If you are dealing with sexual violence, SAVIS encourages you to call its office at (905) 825-3622 or the 24-hour crisis line at (905) 875-1555.



Call today to book your appointment. 905-873-6642 • 99 Sinclair Avenue, Suite 210