

Halton Healthcare says no huge changes coming as result of Province's hospital parking edict

By **Tim Whitnell**
Metroland Media Group

ment, but in some cases, we are already exceeding it, in terms of cost-savings for patients and frequent visitors."

Carlton noted Halton Healthcare has offered daily, weekly and monthly parking rates at its hospitals for more than 15 years.

She said new multi-parking passes (10, 30, and 100-day passes) have been available since December to patients and their families that are frequent hospital visitors, such as dialysis, mental health, cancer and complex transitional care patients.

"We will take time to fully understand the operational logistics and financial impact of these new requirements, but anticipate no immediate changes," said Carlton.

"We will also continue to work closely with our Patient and Family Advisory Council to implement the parking logistics and operational requirements as required by the ministry that are currently not addressed in our parking practice including the new five-day parking pass and further in-and-out privileges throughout a 24-hour period."

During his press conference in Oakville, Flynn also said that as of Monday (Jan. 18) the Government of Ontario is imposing a three-year freeze on the price of parking at all of the province's hospitals.

This includes those operated by Halton Healthcare.

Health Healthcare said it uses parking fees collected at its Oakville, Milton and Georgetown hospitals to cover the cost of providing, maintaining and administering the parking facilities, and to support operational costs related to patient care.

While the Province will soon require many Ontario hospitals offer frequent visitors discounted parking rates, Halton Healthcare says it's way ahead of that curve.

Oakville MPP Kevin Flynn announced Monday, that starting Oct. 1, Ontario hospitals charging more than \$10 per day for parking will need to provide five, 10 and 30-day passes that:

- Are discounted by 50 per cent off the daily rate
- Are transferable between patients and caregivers
- Have in-and-out privileges over a 24-hour period
- Are good for one year from the date of purchase

Since Halton Healthcare hospitals — in Oakville, Milton and Georgetown — charge a daily maximum of \$17.50 for parking, they are among those affected.

That said, Halton Healthcare Communications and Public Affairs Director Trish Carlton noted the Province's request is pretty close to what its hospitals already have in place.

"We have been expecting this report for a number of months and are pleased to see that it closely aligns with our existing practice," she said.

"For many years, Halton Healthcare has provided various parking options to assist patients and their families. In reviewing the announcement, we have determined Halton Healthcare is not only meeting the ministry's new require-

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