

# New hospital funding formula flawed, says Oliver

By Oksana Buhel

A new Hospital Reallocation Funding Formula which transfers grants from smaller hospitals to larger ones is being met with skepticism by Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital board members.

The formula, recently released by the Joint Policy and Planning Committee of the Ministry of Health and Ontario Hospital Association, forces hospitals with under 100 beds to spend approximately \$230 less per patient than a slightly larger hospital can spend on the same patient with the same ailment.

This translates into a \$270,000 loss of funding for GDMH between 1994-1995.

"It's just not fair," insisted GDMH executive director John Oliver. "It means if you live in a small community you will not receive the same quality of service than if you were in a larger hospital."

The formula is based on cost per weighted case, which takes into account length of stay, acuity of illness, operations, nursing time, medicine and other factors.

Ontario hospitals were grouped into six categories to determine the amount of funding they would receive. The first two categories covered teaching hospitals, to which the formula allo-

cates between \$3,300 and \$3,430 per weighted case. GDMH, which is in the sixth category, will receive \$2,300 per weighted case. "Right now we're spending \$2,400 per case," Oliver explained. He added any amount over the allocated funds will have to be paid

by the hospital.

"They're grouping hospitals artificially," Oliver complained. "This formula is saying you must not compare hospitals according to standard of care but to their size-level with other hospitals."

Although GDMH has 112

beds, only 76 of them are allocated as acute and newborn beds - beds on which the formula pertains to. The hospital's 36 chronic care beds are not included in the formula.

Oliver and GDMH chair Connell Smith are confident the originators of the formu-

la are familiar with its flaws and are working to rectify them. "I hope they will correct the flaw in time," Oliver said. The formula is still in the recommendation stage and the implementation date is unknown at this time.

To ensure proper atten-

tion is brought to the matter, GDMH board members are writing to Dennis Timbrell, president of the Ontario Hospital Association and the Ministry of Health to outline their concerns.

"We are not happy with this formula," Oliver concluded.

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