Hospital seeks funding for seniors program

By JANET BAINE

Staff writer

Georgetown Hospital is hoping to get funding for yet another program for seniors and adults who are disabled.

community wellness program, as it is called, will operate during the day. Participants will go to a centre for one to five full or half days on a weekly basis where they will participate in an individualized program. Some people would attend for six months while they recover skills like learning to walk or improving speech, while others would attend permanently.

Similar programs are sometimes called day care for the elderly, but this program offers much more than a break for caregivers, said Marlene Quackenbush, assistant director of patient services.

"Our goal is getting people to reach their potential, what they're capable of doing in the long term," she said. Ideally, once they've completed the program, they will return home, but some people will

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permanently.

"We want to be clear that this hasn't been approved yet. We don't want people to get excited about it when it isn't here yet," Quackenbush said. She will make a presentation to the Halton District Health Council which will then decide if this is one of the programs in Halton which will be approved for funding.

There are currently similar programs in Oakville and Burlington, but these are a long way for Halton Hills residents to travel on a daily basis, Quackenbush said.

A committee of five Georgetown Hospital employees put together a proposal for the program over the past eight months. This type of program was recommended in the Halton Hills Seniors Study in 1992. The Halton District Health Council also noted the need for a similar program in Halton Hills.

The program would operate during the day for about 20 people living in Halton Hills. Some will be in the program on a short term basis for rehabilitation, while they

recover from a stroke or other illness. Others will be in a long term health and support component.

- Ideally it would located be in the supportive housing development, which the hospital has received funding for and are looking for site approval. In the short term, however, the committee is suggesting the Indoor Mall, where the new Georgetown Senior Centre is also located.

The operating costs would be about \$400,000 a year, with an additional \$130,000 to start the program. Four full-time staff members, including a receptionist, physiotherapist and activation coordinator would work with five part-time employees. These would include a social worker, occupational therapist, speech pathologist and van driver, who would provide transportation.

It would cost about \$85 a day for a person to be in the program, but the cost to the client hasn't yet been determined. Participants could be referred by a doctor or professional, a family member or themselves.

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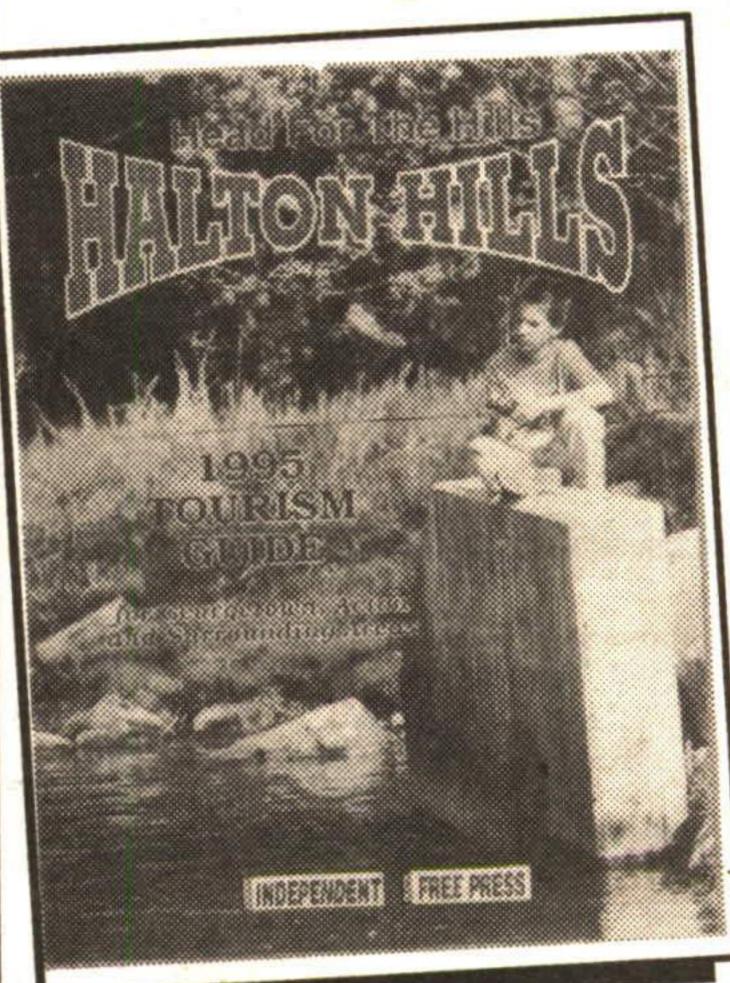
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