

Hospital care gets top marks

For the past 10 days I have been able to see, first-hand, Ontario's much-maligned health care system in action. This is the system, if you believe some, that is grossly under-funded, poorly-run, inefficient, top heavy with bureaucrats and literally killing sick Ontarians.

The system I witnessed may very well need more money, and communication within the various levels needs improving, but if Ontario's health care system is "broken" then nurses, doctors and administrators are doing a wonderful job disguising the problems.

Last Monday at 10:45 a.m. I was scheduled to have knee surgery at a hospital in Halton. At 10:30 a.m. I was wheeled into the operating room, met the anesthesiologist, surgeon and half a dozen others, who, in the five minutes I was awake, seemed to be working like a well-oiled machine.

Four hours later when I awoke, the same two nurses who prepared me for surgery were there to try to raise me out of my stupor. Unfortunately, I didn't co-operate fully with them and by 6 p.m. they determined the best course of action was to admit me for the night.

Between 6 p.m. Monday and 1:30 p.m. the next day (when I was discharged) I was visited by my regular doctor who, without fail, visits any patients he may have at the hospital at 7 a.m. each day—this before starting his regular day at his office at 8:30 a.m. No fewer than six nurses, a couple of them students, stopped in to check my vital signs, ask if I needed anything, and empty the...er... container that I was filling faster than a drunken sailor with one kidney.

THIS
'N
THAT



John McGhie

And, of course, the surgeon who put me back together stopped by to check his handiwork.

In total I was in hospital for 31 hours, had 10 different nurses, one surgeon, numerous operating room personnel, a general practitioner and two physiotherapists deal with me.

And this health care system is "broken"?

Because I live in Halton and had the surgery in the region I was also part of the Halton Hospital in the Home Program, which meant a nurse and physiotherapist visited me at home once a day for the first three days after the surgery. They couldn't have been more helpful or professional.

Certainly when you are dealing with millions of people who, at any time, could require health care, there will be instances of some patients being lost in the shuffle and not receiving the care they should have. But one can only speak from first-hand experience and as far as I'm concerned, the doctors, nurses and other staff who tend to this province's ailing are doing a fantastic job and deserve every penny they earn... and more.

Halton Hills students get busing reprieve

One hundred and seventy-three Halton Hills students will continue to be bused to school even though they live within the allowable walking distance.

The Halton Catholic District School Board decided to continue busing students to Holy Cross and St. Brigid in Georgetown and St. Joseph's in Acton until crossing guards can be provided at high-traffic crossings. It examined four areas in Halton Hills, with a potential saving of approximately \$55,000, as part of its transportation review. This year the board expects to spend about \$350,000 more on transportation than it receives in government funding.

The board's transportation policy states that students living within 1.6 km of the school must walk unless there are safety concerns. In all four instances in Halton Hills, the board decided that the crossings were too dangerous for children to cross alone.

"The safety of the children is always the most important thing," said Halton Hills Trustee Irene McCauley. "Right now, we still

need to have these exceptions."

The board is sending letters to the Town of Halton Hills requesting that crossing guards be provided at the intersections of Main and Mill St. in Acton and Main St. and Maple Ave. in Georgetown and for students crossing Mountainview Rd. S.

The decision affects 30 students attending Holy Cross who are living east of Hwy. 7, 94 students attending St. Brigid living west of Mountainview Rd. S and 49 students attending St. Joseph's living east of Main St. and in the Lakeview area west of Main St. Sixty-three of the students affected—a little more than a third—are in junior or senior kindergarten or Grade 1.

The board will review its transportation again next year and if crossing guards are provided at the intersections, busing may be discontinued.

As for the shortfall in transportation funding, McCauley said, "We'll be looking carefully at other areas of the budget."

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

Groups start Christmas hamper program

Apply now for the 1999 Christmas Hamper Program, a project of the Salvation Army, Acton Rotary Club, IODE and St. Vincent de Paul Society. Apply in

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