

Georgetown hospital OB closure... the readers speak out

The proposed closure of the William Osler Health Centre Georgetown hospital campus's obstetrics and pediatrics wards has sparked dozens of responses by *Independent & Free Press* readers.

In an effort to try and ensure all

voices are heard, we are publishing excerpts of letters to the editor we have received on this issue.

Some of these letters were sent to various health care officials and copies were made available to *The Independent & Free Press* for publication.

On June 21, 2002, I gave birth to our still-born daughter Katelyn at the Georgetown Campus of William Osler Health Centre. It was a planned caesarean delivery. After a very healthy pregnancy, no one expected that Katelyn would be born dead.

From the moment we arrived at Georgetown Hospital and a heartbeat could not be detected, the doctors and nurses at the hospital could not have been more compassionate or caring.

Our doctors, Dr. Selvara Gunaratnam, Dr. Deb Zeni and Dr. Paul Zeni were compassionate, caring and professional. The nursing staff including Anna-Marie, Joan, Sharon, Carol, Jan, Heather, Sandy, Terry, Kathryn and Marielle were outstanding. Our family received exemplary care. These people hold a special place in my family's hearts.

They created an environment of caring in

a time of great sorrow and incredible loss. It is clear in the volunteer work I have since engaged in with Bereaved Families of Ontario, that our experience was truly unique.

To learn that the obstetrics ward at Georgetown Hospital is to be closed is cause for concern. The kind of care my family experienced is difficult to replace. It has never made sense to me as a resident of Georgetown and Halton Region, that the Georgetown Hospital was amalgamated with the Brampton Hospital in Peel and the Etobicoke Hospital in Toronto. These three communities have little in common with each other.

I urge you to review the situation with respect to the impact on Georgetown and surrounding community with the loss of the obstetrics ward at Georgetown.

Theresa Greer, Georgetown

I was deeply saddened to read the announcement that the obstetrics ward at the Georgetown Hospital will be closing this summer. Our first child was born there in the spring of 2002. Not only did we receive excellent medical care from the doctors and nurses but, we also received great personal attention. We were planning to have our second child at the Georgetown Hospital this November.

After reading the announcement, I was left with more questions than answers. Where did the astronomical deficit of \$27-million come from? How much of this deficit can be attributed to expansion and construction at the Etobicoke and Brampton sites? What has happened to senior management salaries over the last two years? What are the criteria on which the board makes major financial decisions?

Rather than closing our obstetrics department, the hospital should determine the sources of the deficit and make plans to cor-

Eleven years ago I delivered my first baby at William Osler Georgetown Hospital Campus. The OB nurses provided excellent care.

I have also had the opportunity to do a nursing co-op through Georgetown District High School many years ago. The nurses were willing to take the time to teach and show me so much. At that time I had decided that obstetrics was the place that I wanted to further my studies. It makes a world of difference when someone takes time out of their busy shift to talk and show you all that goes on in the obstetrics department.

Now, my husband and I are expecting another baby in July. It was without a doubt that Georgetown obstetrics was the place we wanted to be to bring our new baby into the world. Some reasons would

rect those departments. Failure to address the root cause of the problem only means that we will be faced with the same problem in the future. The savings of \$850,000 from closing the Georgetown obstetrics department is only a drop in the \$27-million dollar bucket and is a drastic loss to our community.

Obviously, I am concerned about losing the obstetrics department but, I am even more concerned about the ripple effect that this could have across our hospital.

If we lose obstetrics, the equipment utilization of the ultrasound machines will also be reduced. If we have an underused diagnostic imaging department, will it be next to be closed? What will happen to the cardiac observation unit and inpatient surgery?

The closing of the obstetrics department is "one of the first steps" according to Bob Bell. Will our hospital be reduced to a glorified first aid room?

Catherine Hoskin, Georgetown

be the experience in the past, our doctor is in town, and also our friends and family are very close by.

We never thought we would have to change those plans now! The stress and worry in finding a new hospital and new doctor is not what we want to do now. Now we have to consider an out-of-town hospital! What will it be? Brampton? Mississauga? Oakville? Milton?

Georgetown is a growing community with new and young families. The drive to Brampton or any other city hospital is about 30-45 minutes, on a good day. If anything Georgetown Hospital Campus should consider finding alternative solutions to expanding the obstetrics department for a community that is growing.

Anita Paget, Georgetown

Have your say on OB closure

The William Osler Health Centre has decided to permanently move its in-

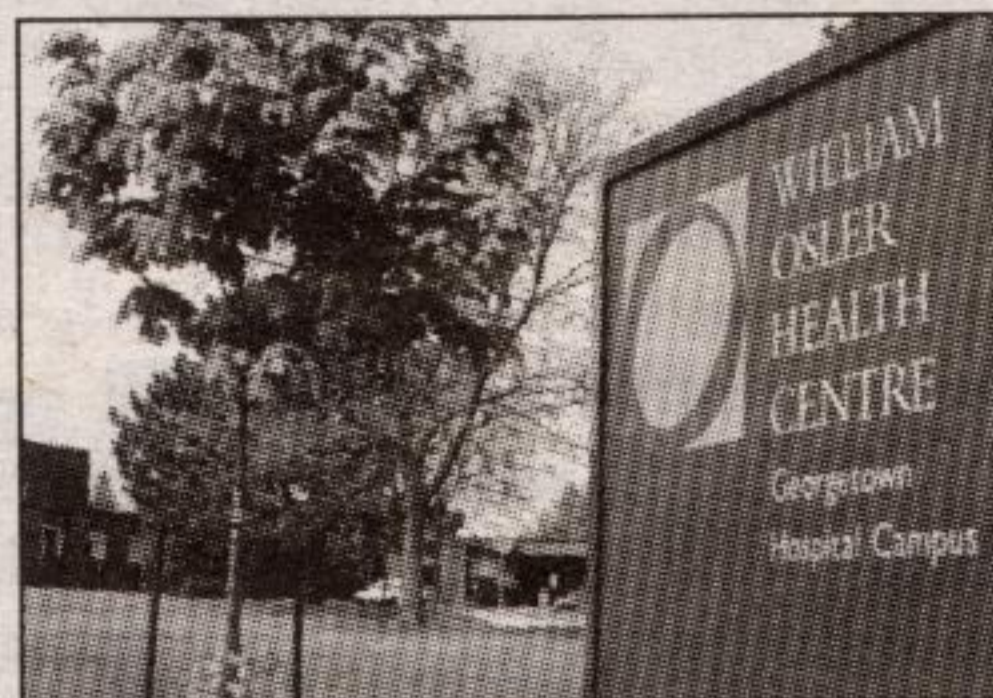
We will ensure the ballots are delivered to WOHC CEO Bob Bell.

patient obstetrics and pediatrics services at the Georgetown hospital campus to Brampton July 5.

The Independent & Free Press, along with many community groups and

residents, opposes this move and is inviting readers to voice their opposition to this plan.

If you oppose WOHC's decision to close Georgetown hospital's obstetrics unit, fill in the ballot below and return it to *The Independent & Free Press* before 5 p.m., June 4.



Ballots can be dropped off at our office in the Georgetown Market Place (Zellers end), mailed to *The Independent & Free Press* at 280 Guelph, Unit 29, Georgetown, Ont.

L7G 4B1 or faxed by dialing 905-873-0398. Ballots are also available in the centre court of the Georgetown Market Place and can be submitted electronically by accessing *The Independent & Free Press*' home Web page at www.independentfreepress.com

Keep our hospital's OB ward open!

I believe Georgetown hospital's obstetrics/pediatrics ward must stay open.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Georgetown is a rapidly-growing community primarily fueled by the influx of young families.

Our town is way behind in being able to provide services to these families, i.e. schools, recreation, facilities and programs. Isn't it important to be able to support

Having spent many hours over the years working hard to raise money to benefit the hospital and the services it provides to the local community, this is extremely disappointing and in my view shortsighted.

Georgetown and the surrounding rural-area residents have the right to receive the health care they are entitled to in their own community; it is unacceptable to have to travel to another town to receive it.

It is with chagrin that I learn of the intention to close the obstetrics/pediatrics ward of the Georgetown campus of the William Osler Health Centre.

Closing the ward in the Georgetown hospital will negatively impact other aspects of the hospital, which in turn will create long-lasting economic decisions throughout our town.

our community?

I think the closing of the obstetrics department at Georgetown hospital campus is a step back into the dark ages.

Please elect to support our young families.

Jill Johnson, Georgetown

The WOHC must make a commitment to the Georgetown campus in the interest of its patients, the morale of hospital staff and that of the many volunteers who assist them daily and to prevent the disfranchisement of people like myself who work outside of the hospital to raise funds.

Reverse this decision and keep the hospital vibrant and relative to a growing community!

Keith Froggett, Georgetown

It is this very hospital that was built with funds raised by the community for the community. It must be kept running in all capacities.

I request that you use your political position to ensure all encompassing, permanent services at the Georgetown Hospital.

Barbara Jennings, Georgetown

West Nile virus: Fighting mosquitoes.

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