

Health accord only a first step

Recently Prime Minister Paul Martin signed a 10-year health accord with the provincial premiers.

While I have some concerns, I believe that this health accord is a good first step to resolving some of the problems facing our health care system. It's good news for Canadians, and potentially good news for Wellington-Halton Hills.

This accord provides for \$41 billion in new money over 10 years. Numbers of that size become meaningless, so I'll try to break it down.

The first six years call for \$3 billion in new money per year; with 308 ridings, Wellington-Halton Hills should expect to receive \$9.7 million in new money per year for health care. This should go a long way to fix health care in Wellington-Halton Hills. This is a very simple analysis, but it will give you an idea of what we are talking about.

Where is the money going to come from? As we argued during the election, money is available for health care without having to raise taxes; in recent years the government has consistently underestimated the surplus.

As mentioned previously, I do have some concerns.

In Halton Hills, Acton has a severe shortage of family doctors. Family doctors are important gatekeepers in our system; without one, you can't get a prescription or get referred to a specialist.

PARLIAMENT HILL REPORT



Mike Chong

I am also still concerned about the future of Georgetown Hospital as a full service community hospital. We need to ensure that this additional money goes to solving these problems in Halton Hills. Your federal government has provided the money. It is now up to the provincial Ministry of Health to address these concerns with municipal officials, hospitals, healthcare professionals and other stakeholders.

I certainly will be raising this issue with Ontario Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman.

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We've had one Town Hall in Acton; our next one is in Elora on October 14 at the Community Centre at 7 pm. Hope to see you there.

—Mike Chong is the MP for the riding of Wellington-Halton Hills

"The Natural Lunchbox"

Join Nicole Meier, Naturopathic Doctor and Deborah Palmer of "A Movable Feast" for a workshop about healthy lunches for school children.

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Saturday September 25th

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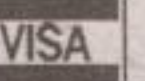
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VIA Rail changes schedule for Sarnia train

VIA Rail recently announced a change in schedule for its Toronto-Sarnia route, which stops in Georgetown.

Train 85 from Georgetown to Sarnia will now depart from the Georgetown station at

11:32 a.m. Train 88 from Sarnia will arrive back in Georgetown at 9:03 p.m.

Other VIA trains on the Toronto-Sarnia run remain unchanged. For more information contact VIA at 1-888-842-7245.

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