

Mayor told in meeting with health minister Georgetown hospital cannot cut ties with WOHC

Cutting ties with William Osler Health Centre or realigning with Oakville and Milton hospitals is not an option for Georgetown hospital; Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette said Ontario Minister of Health George Smitherman told him recently.

That was just one topic discussed at a meeting between Bonnette and Smitherman at his Toronto office earlier this month.

"I thought the meeting went well," said Bonnette, who spearheaded the fight to keep the obstetrics and pediatrics units open at Georgetown hospital earlier this year.

It was Smitherman who came through for the hospital, the mayor, other politicians, doctors, nurses and the many residents fighting to maintain the units in Georgetown when he said in the legislature in June that the provincial government wouldn't support a plan to close obstetrics at the hospital.

"He does have an interest in our town," said Bonnette Monday.



GEORGE SMITHERMAN

At the meeting he said he discussed the history of Georgetown hospital and asked Smitherman several questions.

Bonnette said Smitherman told him he would consider his request for separate funding for smaller hospitals that have been amalgamated with larger facilities.

The mayor also said Smitherman said the Georgetown hospital would still be open after the new hospital opens in Brampton.

Bonnette said the meeting was positive and he believes he has an open line of communication with the health minister.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

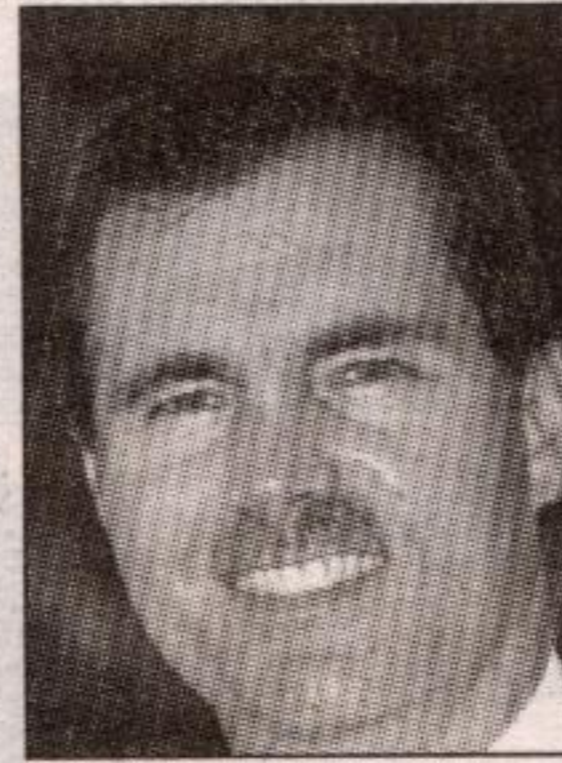
Second get-together set for Friday Groups, citizens to discuss suicide prevention plan

Local groups and individuals that deal with mental health issues will come together later this week to continue developing a comprehensive suicide prevention strategy for Halton.

The process was sparked earlier this year by a startling health department report that concluded suicide was the leading cause of injury-related deaths among Halton males, 18 and over, and the third-leading cause of injury-related deaths among Halton females, between 1995 and 1999.

To start developing the strategy, a meeting was held in May to identify Halton-specific issues and gaps in service related to suicide prevention, identification, treatment and long-term support.

Halton Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health Dr. Bob Nosal reported there was over-

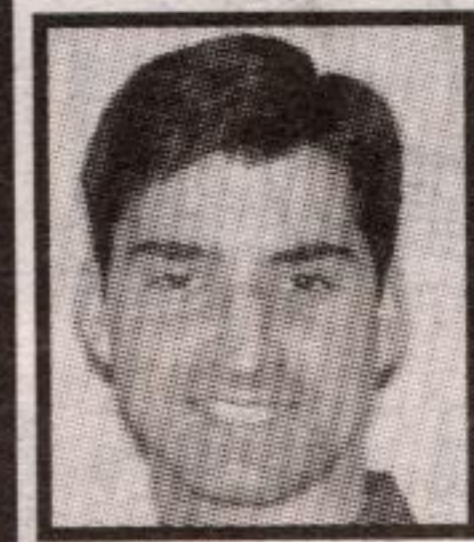


DR. BOB NOSAL

whelming support at the meeting to form a Halton Suicide Prevention Coalition, which could provide a forum for networking, education, resource development, awareness raising, advocacy for increased services and service co-ordination.

The second meeting, scheduled for Friday, October 29, is designed to prioritize the needs and gaps in service earlier identified and determine the structure and accountability of the coalition.

Region staff plan to routinely report to council on the progress of the strategy.



By Cory Soal
R.H.A.D.

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