

# OPINION

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## Local clinics celebrate milestone

Mental illness comes in a variety of forms and it is not a subject that is often talked about easily.

Having said that, it is important to every community that mental health services are readily available for those in need.

In Halton Hills those services are provided by the North Halton Mental Health Clinic, which has locations in both Acton (19 Willow St. N.) and Georgetown (93 Main St. S.). There is also a clinic serving north Halton in Milton.

Tomorrow (Thursday) the North Halton Mental Health Clinic celebrates 30 years of providing this community with quality, community-based mental health services.

"The North Halton Mental Health Clinic has been providing free, accessible mental health programs and services through dedicated employees and partnerships with other local health care providers for three decades," said Regional Chair Gary Carr. "Halton Region is proud to be able to offer this service particularly as our population continues to grow, especially in the north."

Last year the clinic provided services to more than 3,000 people in north Halton and of those, more than 1,000 received ongoing support from clinic staff.

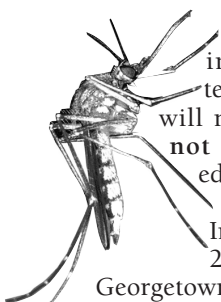
It takes a special kind of individual who is able to offer help to someone suffering from a mental illness. We are lucky in north Halton to have three local centres with such competent and dedicated staff.

Anyone who has mental health concerns or knows of someone who does should talk to a family doctor to discuss whether a referral to the clinic is needed.

For more information on the North Halton Mental Health Clinic visit the Halton Region website at [www.halton.ca](http://www.halton.ca).

## Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

Mail or drop off:

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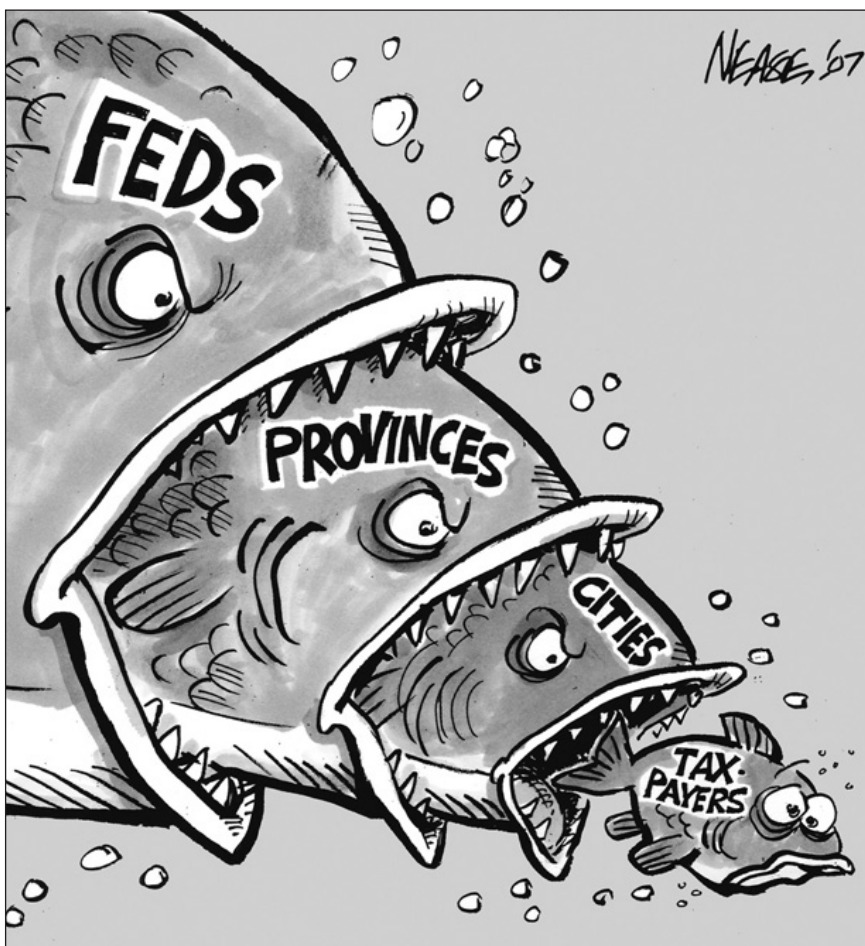
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Steve Nease



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The dangers of drinking while pregnant are many

Dear editor,

While I was delighted to see information on preventing fetal alcohol syndrome in your paper (Wednesday September 26), I would like to add some information.

Fetal alcohol syndrome is only one of the diagnoses caused by alcohol consumption during pregnancy and accounts for only 10 per cent of affected children. The most common diagnosis is alcohol related neuro-developmental disorder which shows none of

the physical signs mentioned in the article (abnormal facial features, slow growth, damaged internal organs) but all diagnoses share the most important effect from pre-natal alcohol consumption which was not mentioned: brain damage.

And while these disorders account for more cases of cognitive disabilities than any other single disorder, most of the children have IQs in the normal range. Their problem is that they are unable to make good use of this IQ

due to the brain damage which causes such issues as an inability to understand cause and effect, problems comprehending abstract concepts such as ownership, time and money, and behaving much younger than age or IQ would suggest.

Many of these children are misdiagnosed as ADHD (attention deficit disorder), ODD (oppositional defiant disorder) or bipolar, because some of the behavioural problems look similar.

FAS and ARND come under the relatively new umbrella term FASD which stands for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Fetal Alcohol Effects or FAE (not EAF as mentioned in the article) is no longer used as a diagnostic term. There is no known safe time or amount to drink while pregnant, and you do not need to be addicted to alcohol to cause FASD. Binge drinking has been found to be the most damaging to the fetus.

For any parents, foster parents, grandparents or other caregivers who suspect their child may have a FASD, or who have a diagnosis, I urge you to contact me at [shiona.watson@sympati-co.ca](mailto:shiona.watson@sympati-co.ca) so I can put you in touch with resources, in particular The Guelph FASD caregiver support group, which meets once a month, in downtown Guelph.

Shiona Watson,  
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder  
Education & Advocacy

### Support for Acton branch appreciated

Dear editor,

The Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society had the pleasure of hosting the annual Guelph/Acton/Wellington Unit volunteer appreciation night recently.

The Acton Legion was chosen as the location and on behalf of our Acton branch I would like to thank the legion and the legion ladies for providing such a nice dinner and helping to make our evening such a success. I would also like to express sincere thanks to the group, B2D with Anne Mcintyre, who entertained both before dinner and following the award ceremonies. How fortunate Acton is to have such great local talent and how generous of them to volunteer their musical gifts which were greatly appreciated.

The people of Acton continue to support our Acton cancer branch and

the turnout of more than 80 guests, both local and from various areas of Wellington, confirm that.

On behalf of the Acton branch of the Canadian Cancer Society, I would like to express our gratitude.

Pat Kentner,  
publicity rep, Acton branch,  
Canadian Cancer Society

### Good Samaritan thanked for watching out for senior

Dear editor,

Thank you to the Good Samaritan who patiently waited in their car on James Young Dr. last week.

You realized I was a senior on a step ladder changing a light bulb above my garage and you drove off only after I was safely back in my home.

Marie Brasseur,  
Georgetown

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