

The Canadian Champion



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Long term care for seniors gets shot in the arm

By KAREN SMITH

The Champion

Allendale may receive the 50 additional beds it has been waiting for following Friday's provincial government announcement.

Cam Jackson, minister responsible for seniors, revealed the Tories' plan to provide 650 long-term care beds to combat a shortage in Halton. The plan is to be set in motion immediately.

"It's fabulous news," said Allendale administrator Margaret Strecker. "We've just been under-bedded for so long."

Ms Strecker said she's confident Allendale is now in line for 50 new beds as part of a proposal already made to the province. The plan surrounds a \$5 million facelift to the former Martin House at the Ontario Street site.

"I think we've got a pretty good chance," she said.

Mr. Jackson first made the announcement before about 50 people at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre Friday morning and then officially released the news at Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital in the afternoon.

"We're going to be putting shovels in the ground this year and people into their residences next year," Mr. Jackson told the pleased Milton seniors.

Oakville's hospital is expected to be one of the organizations bidding to build a new long-term care facility. A site for some of the new beds has been proposed next to the hospital at the former location of Oakville-Trafalgar High School.

Tendering will begin immediately on the 650 new long-term care beds, which will increase the number by 70 per cent.

The plan is part of the Tories' Wednesday announcement that the provincial government will provide \$1.2 billion in additional funding for long-term care.

The province will spend an additional \$43.7 million on beds in nursing homes and homes for the aged in the region over the next eight years.

Over eight years, 1,579 new beds will come to Halton — an increase of 270 per cent over the current 937 beds. This exceeds the Health Services Restructuring Commission's April 27 recommendation of 1,241 new beds by 2003.

Across the province, 20,000 new nursing

home beds will be created. Only Toronto and Peel, which have higher populations, will receive more beds than Halton.

The region currently has 58.7 long-term care beds per 1,000 people over age 75, the lowest ratio in Ontario. The provincial average is 95.5.

Last month the provincial government announced that 1,700 temporary long-term care beds would be opened in hospitals across the province over the next 18 months.

The interim measure means that seniors will have access to temporary long-term care beds while accommodations for those announced Friday are being created, said Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh.

"The (Mike) Harris government promised to invest in long-term care services and we have followed through on the promise," he said.

"The people of our communities in Halton are big winners in this process."

And regional Chair Joyce Savoline said the news is more than welcome.

"I am pleased that the province has listened and has acknowledged that Halton needs to increase its supply of beds," she said.

"There are a number of initiatives already being planned in Halton, both in the public and the private sectors, which can now proceed."

An announcement on funding for community-based long-term care services is expected this week.



Margaret Strecker



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

That's neighbourly

Jennifer McLean uses a litter stick to snare trash in 16 Mile Creek near the Optimist Centre while Laura Collier stands ready with a garbage bag. The two were part of Saturday's cross-town clean-up during Good Neighbours Day.

NEWSLINES

BILL'S AUTO BODY SHOP



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Climber falls from Rattlesnake

A 15-year-old rock climber broke his ankle after falling 15 feet at Rattlesnake Point Saturday.

The Richmond Hill youth lost his footing while rock climbing with a group of youths at 4 p.m. and fell to a ledge, said Det. Sgt. Jackie Gordon of Halton Regional Police.

She said the Milton Fire Department lowered a rescue basket to the youth and he was pulled to safety. He was transported to Milton District Hospital by ambulance.

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Mon. - Fri. 9:30-6:00, Sat. 9:30-6:00, Sun. 12-5

WIN A 25 PT. DIAMOND FOR MOM on MOTHER'S DAY

Pan our Diamond Mine from May 7 - 10th and you could be the Lucky Winner of a 25 pt. Diamond. Here's how to win: inside the Diamond Mine is a sand box filled with Zirconias. Submit a sales receipt from participating stores in the Mall (minimum purchase of \$10, excluding Zellers) and you may fill a pail of sand and pan for a precious gem. Only one gem allowed per pail. The person who finds the pink Zirconia wins the 25 pt. diamond.

All gems courtesy of Brancier Jewellers



HOURS THE MINE WILL BE OPEN:

Wednesday 2:00-5:00 pm
Thursday 2:00-7:00 pm
Friday 2:00-8:00 pm
Saturday 10:00 am-4:00 pm