



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Patients will pay price for anesthetist shortage

It's a classic good news/bad news story.

The good news is an obstetrician, long missing from Milton District Hospital, is back on board. And recently-increased services such as plastic and orthopedic surgery will provide more options for residents.

But the bad news is all this is knee-capped by a shortage of trained anesthetists.

The correlation is a simple one -- without an anesthetist on site, there can be no operations. And Milton's two remaining anesthetists can't cover all the available hours between them.

Health care has long been a political hot potato, and today's lack of anesthetists appears to be the consequence of a lack of foresight on the part of an earlier government.

As reported elsewhere in this newspaper, a prior initiative to cut health care costs by slashing enrolment spaces in medical schools may have contributed to today's shortage. The result is a dire deficiency of doctors not only in Milton, but all over.

The attempt to save money could end up carrying a high price.

Irene Gentle



OUR READERS WRITE

Fire open house a community venture

Dear Editor:

Fire Prevention Week was October 3 to 9 and the Milton Fire Department started its celebration with an open house at its headquarters on Saturday, Oct. 3.

This event started off slowly, but after the lunch hour, the crowds began arriving to watch demonstrations and check out the displays on hand.

The open house would not have been possible without the kind support and advertising of several different businesses such as The Meat Terminal, Grants Auto Wreckers, Loblaws, Halton Community Credit Union, The Milton Champion and the citizens who came out

to see their Fire Department.

Don Stewart
Milton Fire Department

How do you kill lobster?

Dear Editor:

I have followed the ongoing saga between Mr. Clark and Mrs. Taylor regarding one of my favourite foods.

The question begged to be asked is, "Please, Mrs. Taylor. How does one kill a lobster -- firing squad, lethal injection or hanging?"

Frank Green
Commercial Street

Elderly woman couldn't get hip surgery in Milton

Lack of anesthetists dangerous, says citizen

(The following letter was sent to Milton District Hospital and a copy was filed with The Champion)

Dear Editor:

My mother broke her hip recently and I was very impressed by the competence and professionalism of the ambulance attendants, nurses and doctors who cared for her at Milton District and Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial hospitals. This is consistent with my previous experience and I am grateful to have access to such an excellent local facility.

There was, however, one serious flaw in the system and if my mother's injuries had been different, it could have been fatal.

On Saturday morning the surgeon in Milton was ready to operate, as extended immobility is dangerous to the elderly, almost invariably resulting in complications. Unfortunately, he couldn't operate as no anesthetist was available that weekend in Milton. I don't know

why. Remarkably, after an hour on the telephone he was able to line up a surgeon from Burlington to operate on her in Oakville later that day.

From past experience with one of the anesthetists in Milton, I am confident that they share the competence of their colleagues. However, if the situation had been more urgent, the delay involved in arranging and effecting transport could have resulted in an unnecessary death.

If Milton District Hospital is to perform operations, it needs to have all the resources. It is wasteful to have one missing ingredient (anesthetist) while the others (surgeon, nurses and operating room) are on standby.

Furthermore, it is dangerous not to communicate this situation to the service providers (ambulance) so that valuable time is not wasted.

I understand that the absence of anesthetists is a recent develop-

ment (since July) and I am sure you are doing what you can to correct this unacceptable situation.

George Halet
Milton

Letters welcome

The Canadian Champion welcomes letters to the editor.

Letters must be signed and the address and the telephone number of the writer included.

Mail letters to:
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Box 248,
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or leave them at our
office, 191 Main St. E.



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