

# Mulvale tells off Lastman

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prescription drugs.

"All communities, including Halton, try to support individuals and families in need," said Halton's commissioner of social services Adelina Urbanski.

"We must be diligent in responding to the needs of our citizens and ensure that Halton continues to be a great place to live."

The issue of paying for the poor outside of Halton's borders also arose at regional council recently as part of the 2000 budget debate.

Some councillors wondered how the Region could afford to keep sending big cash payments to Toronto if the economy took a nose dive, sending social assistance costs through the roof.

"I'm sick, quite often, about the costs going from Milton and Halton to Toronto," said Milton Mayor Gord Krantz.

Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale also used the meeting to air her objections to an accusation from Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman that the 905 areas aren't doing their share to tackle poverty.

"For every dollar we spend, how much do we send to Toronto?" she asked Halton staff.

"It's about a 2-1 ratio, or \$2 for Toronto, and \$1 to Halton," replied the Region's manager of budgets Rob Rossini.

But simply dumping money into social assistance coffers won't be effective if affordable housing isn't in place, warned Ms Mulvale.

"The number one thing that's driving people's inability to meet their needs is the high cost of housing," she said. "You can't tackle poverty without tackling the housing issue."

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