

Councillors appear split on performance measurements

New provincial guidelines aimed at helping municipalities compare performance measurements with each other were given a mixed review at the Region recently.

Members of Halton's administration and finance committee appeared split on whether the mandatory performance reporting requirements would be beneficial or detrimental to the Region.

But it received a cautious thumbs up from Halton's Director of Performance Measurement Ed Archer.

"It's not perfect and it will evolve," he said.

"But as a first step, it's a good first step."

The legislation requires municipalities to submit the costs of services in order to compare them with others.

Halton already draws up its own performance measurements for private use.

The difference is it'll now submit a less detailed analysis to the

Province as well.

"There are a variety of policy decisions and planning decisions that affect the performance of a certain service," said Mr. Archer.

"It's about developing a framework across Ontario to look at non-financial costs and compare them within municipalities. The information will be of use to municipal managers in order to develop a set of practices for the area. Performance measures are the beginning. It's not the end. The indicators themselves aren't going to give us answers."

Krantz concerned

But how the information could be used concerned Mayor Gord Krantz.

"If it sounds like I'm critical of what the government has done, I am," he said.

"Are they going to start playing one municipality against another? In the name of fairness, that shouldn't happen."

He worried the measurements could be used to penalize areas

that already have their house in order.

"We're doing a good job, so why the legislation," he asked.

"I can't figure it out, I really can't."

Others, such as Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale said the information would have to be analyzed and computed fairly in order to be useful.

She gave the example of fire services within Halton.

Though Milton, Halton Hills and Burlington all have volunteer fire fighters, Oakville doesn't, she pointed out.

So by looking at cost of the service only, Oakville could be deduced as being way out of line:

"You have to use this as a tool if it's sincere to determine best practices," she said. "It has to be apples to apples."

The analysis is to be submitted to the Province as an addition to an already running annual report, said Mr. Archer.

It'll contain up to 35 broad-level efficiency measures.

Medical centre planned

• from OPTIMIST on page 3 developed to a higher and better use."

Mr. Boisvin's plans for the two-storey, two-acre property revolve around the creation of an all-encompassing medical clinic that would include a laboratory, pharmacy and coffee shop.

Kingsway Court resident Richard Murray — representing a small group of his neighbours at Monday's meeting — expressed reserved support for the proposal provided that the retail end of the centre wouldn't get out of hand.

His concerns appeared to be eased by the applicant, who offered assurances that the pharmacy and coffee shop would be primarily for physician and patient use. "We don't envision it being a huge Starbucks or Shoppers Drug Mart."

Additional concerns about the clinic's lighting and signage were addressed in similar fashion, with a "low key" approach

agreed to be taken.

Ward 4 Councillor John Challinor supported the plan, but said a public meeting with neighbouring residents should be scheduled to "proceed on the right foot."

The plan was unanimously received. A technical report is set to follow.

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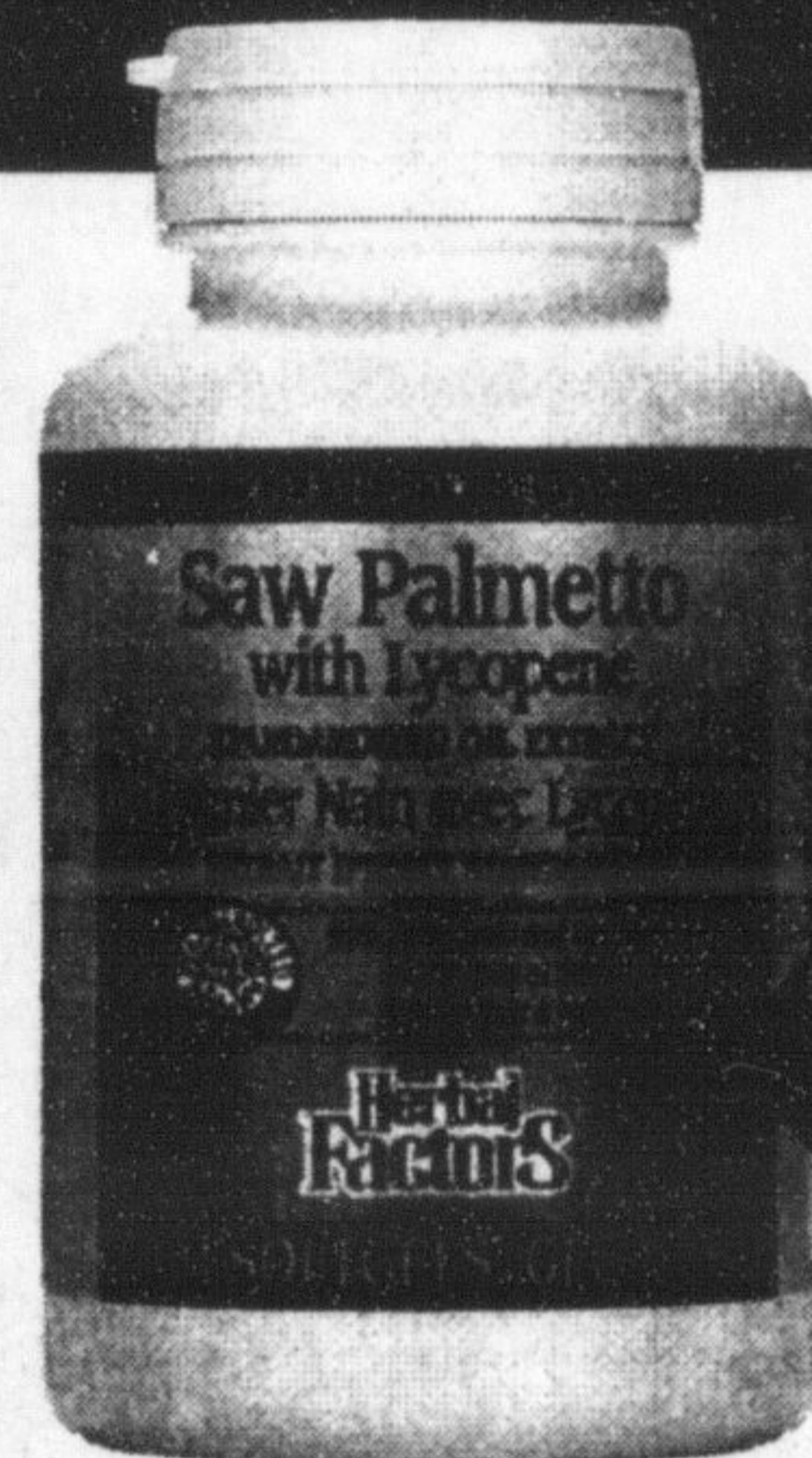
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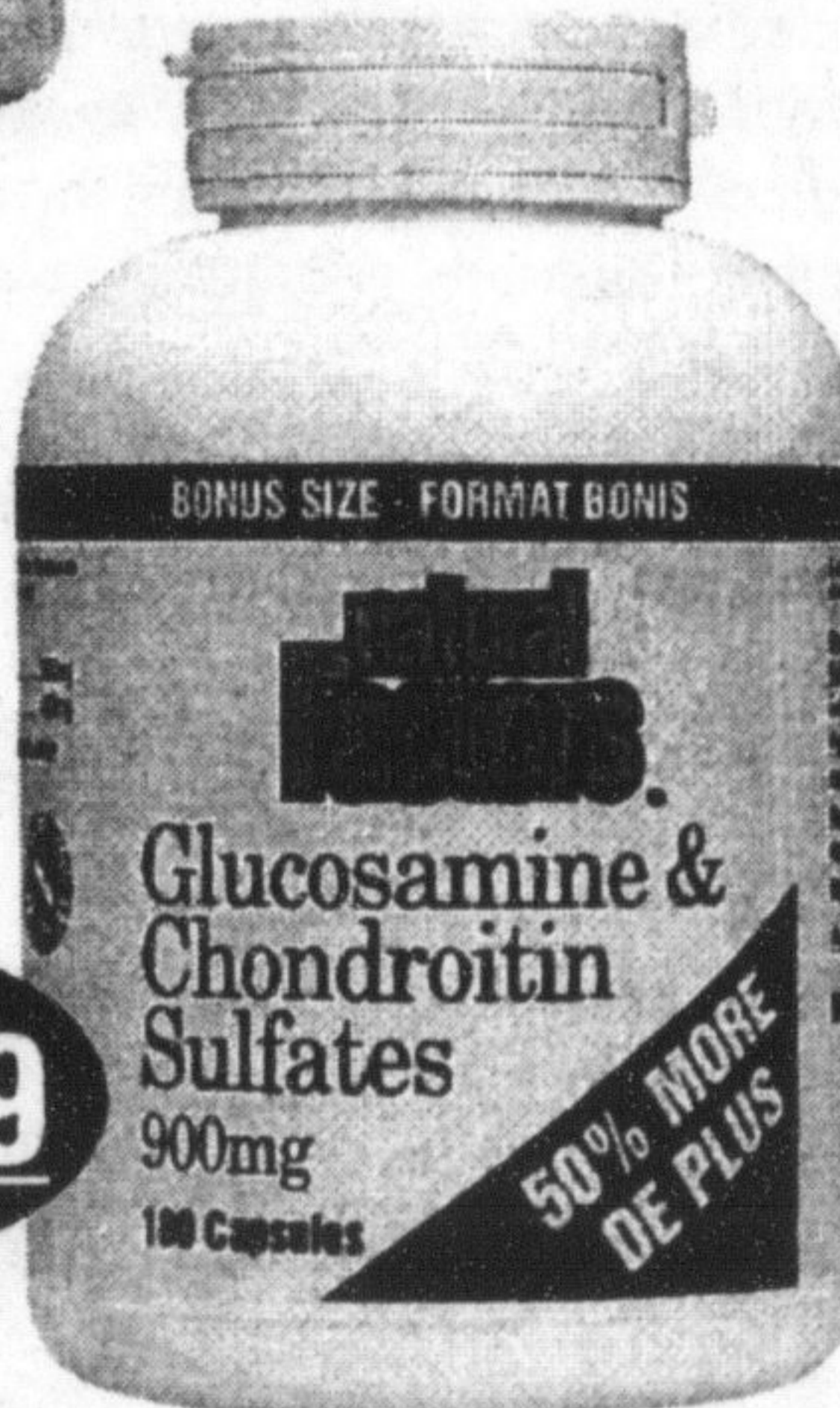
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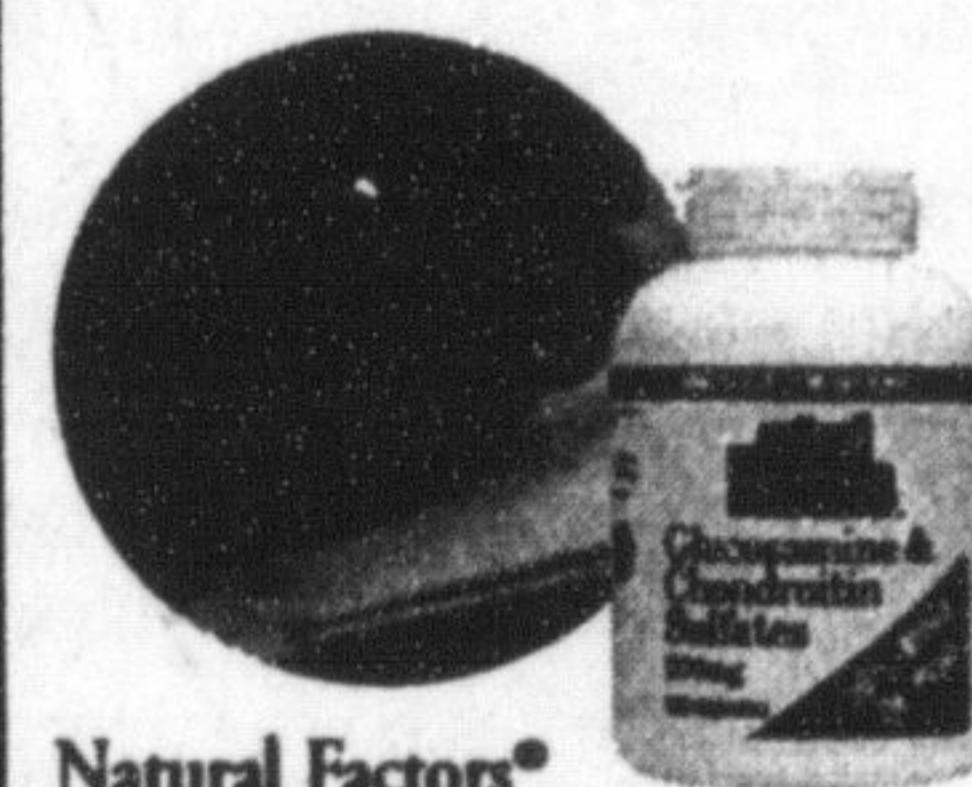


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New Belgian study proves that Glucosamine Sulphate (GLS) works long term to reduce the suffering and improve the symptoms related to osteoarthritis. The research was recently published in The Lancet medical journal. The study was conducted by Professor Jean Reginster over a 3 year period, comparing patients who took a 1500 mg dose of GLS and a group taking a placebo. The radiograph images of the patients' knees showed that the placebo group had significant narrowing of the space between the joints of the knee while there was no such narrowing among the patients on GLS.

Reported in January issue of the Journal of Rheumatology, were finds from a recent French study of Chondroitin sulphate. Researchers found that 1000mg of Chondroitin per day was effective in reducing pain and improving quality of life in patients suffering with Osteoarthritis.