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Anything to beat the heat

Candace Sharp of the Town's Kids Camp program cools off while running some of the children's games during the Canada Day celebration Monday at Rotary Park. The event was another success despite the hot, sticky weather. Temperatures soared to 35 degrees Celsius, or 45 degrees Celsius with the humidity. See more photos from the festivities on page 22.

Photo by
GRAHAM PAINE

HHS to receive \$4.8 million

But hospitals still expect to face financial difficulties

By **HOWARD MOZEL**
Special to *The Champion*

Halton Healthcare Services (HHS) has learned it will receive more than \$4.8 million in additional operating funding for the 2002-03 fiscal year.

HHS officials received notification Tuesday from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care outlining the details, which included a 2 per cent inflationary increase — allotted across the board to all Ontario hospitals — amounting to \$1.7 million.

HHS also received confirmation that a performance grant of \$1.7 million that was received in the 2001-02 fiscal year, will now be included in the base budget. The balance of the funding, \$1.3 mil-

lion, is related to growth in various programs and services in the hospital, such as the Renal Dialysis program.

However, the funding announcement doesn't address last year's deficit of \$3 million, which was primarily attributable to the growth in patient volumes at both hospital sites last year, nor does it provide funding for the level of growth anticipated this year.

"We will be dialoguing with ministry officials to fully assess and evaluate the details of the announcement to determine how this funding will affect our organization," said HHS Senior Vice-President Allan Halls.

"Like all other health care facilities in the province, our organization is facing some major

challenges. As the communities of Milton and Oakville continue to grow, we are challenged to keep up to the demand for hospital based health-care services. While we appreciate the funding increase, our initial calculations are indicating that we will be facing some significant financial and operational challenges in the upcoming year."

HHS encompasses both Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial and Milton District hospitals.

"Everyone at HHS has worked very hard to provide the best possible health care services to the residents of our growing communities in a fiscally-responsible manner," said Mr. Halls.

"We will continue our discussions with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to ensure

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