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Government funding 'a must' to help compensate for losses

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Liberal MPP Ted McMeekin, Halton's only opposition member, said it's incumbent upon the government to compensate hospitals that have taken a financial bath because of SARS.

"We've talked to some government members on this and we're hoping to get a positive response today or tomorrow," he said yesterday morning on his way to Queen's Park. "And if not, we will be asking the question in the House (legislature)."

Ward 3 Councillor Cindy Lunau, a member of the HHS board, said the costs are

certainly "mind-boggling" and that hospitals in Halton did what was asked of them, and did it well.

Government funding at this point is a must, she said.

"The key absolutely lies with what the Province is going to do," she said. "This, obviously, is a huge impact."

Mr. Oliver said he understands hospitals in the Greater Toronto area - Peel, York and Durham - have been hit financially due to SARS.

Even hospitals outside of the GTA have suffered. Hamilton hospitals have been suffered more than \$3.5 million in costs

and lost revenue because of SARS.

The Region's health department reported yesterday afternoon that 21 people are in home quarantine in connection to the latest SARS outbreak. That's down from 58 late last week.

There are also no suspect or probable cases of, or people under investigation for SARS.

"The numbers are definitely going down," said Sharon Little, communications specialist with the health department.

Jason Misner can be reached at jmisner@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

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