

# EMS Master Plan is adopted

Regional council adopted Halton's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Master Plan recently.

The document outlines strategies and tools the Region's EMS needs to manage the delivery of timely, cost effective and accountable emergency medical services while addressing the various pressures on the delivery of EMS over the next 10 years.

"From 1996 to 2003, EMS calls in Halton doubled," said Halton Medical Officer of Health Dr. Bob Nosal. "With an expected six to eight per cent annual increase in calls over the next 10 years, the strategies outlined in the master plan will ensure Halton Region EMS continues to deliver appropriate pre-hospital emergency medical services."

The EMS Master Plan serves as a multi-year strategic planning framework for policy, organizational, capital and operational decisions pertaining to the EMS division.

The plan focuses on an environmental

scan that includes a review of present-day service capabilities, 10-year challenges and service priorities and recommendations to address increased demand for pre-hospital emergency medical services to the year 2015.

One of the key recommendations included in the plan is the introduction of emergency response units (ERU), which are smaller vehicles than ambulances and are staffed by one paramedic, unlike a traditional ambulance, which is staffed by two. These could be, for example, sport utility vehicles or vans.

The goal of ERUs is to improve response times and save in the costs of introducing full ambulances until patient transportation needs require it. ERUs are not capable of transporting patients to the hospital but will carry necessary equipment to stabilize patients until the ambulance arrives.

"The adoption of this plan fulfills the previous council's direction for EMS to

create a 10-year master plan," said Regional Chair Joyce Savoline. "This plan ensures Halton residents will continue to receive a high level of emergency medical services in an efficient and cost-effective manner."

Other recommendations include evaluating and implementing in-vehicle mapping, which means installing computers containing mapping technology in EMS vehicles, implementing a deployment strategy based on times when there is more demand for EMS, such as rush hour, and hiring additional paramedics.

For more information on the EMS Master Plan, contact the Halton Region Health Department at (905) 825-6000 or visit [www.region.halton.on.ca/health](http://www.region.halton.on.ca/health).

## Event part of project

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Regional health and Ontario Works brochures be produced in multiple languages. "A lot of people wanted more detailed written information set out in different languages."

It was also brought up during Dr. Waldron's research that Regional materials should reflect cultural diversity and sensitivity, like when it comes to health care. "They would like Regional materials to understand where they're coming from."

Dr. Waldron's presentation was followed by group discussions where diversity issues and barriers were looked at and suggestions were made.

Milton resident Jennifer Bascom noted the language used in society still needs to become more inclusive. "We still speak in a language that's corrupted by sexism," she said, such as using the term 'chairman.'

As an openly bisexual person, Ms Bascom said a barrier she's been faced with in Milton is conservative attitudes, noting she's even had to deal with verbal harassment

While it was suggested the Region needs

to take a leadership role in reaching out to diverse groups, North Halton Cultural Awareness Council chairperson Elizabeth Carmichael pointed out, "The community has to reach out to the Region as well."

She added that the Region has also shown leadership by having the Halton Diversity Advisory Committee (HDAC), which hosted the April 27 meeting.

She also suggested in situations where there is a language barrier, use an interpreter instead of a translator, since the interpreter can communicate the cultural context and ideas behind the words.

The focus groups are part of a three-year project HDAC has undertaken to address Regional barriers since receiving grant funds from the Canadian Heritage Multiculturalism Program last spring.

Regional Chairman Joyce Savoline emphasized that Halton is very serious about this initiative. "There are barriers and we're trying to identify them," she said. "I think we're putting this (grant) money to extremely good use."

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## Nomination meeting Thurs.

Local Conservative Party of Canada members will decide who's going to represent them in the next federal election at a candidate nomination meeting Thursday evening for the Halton electoral district.

The meeting will be held at Southside Community Church, 2850 Derry Rd. E., with registration starting at 7 p.m. and speeches kicking off at 8 p.m.

Four local men are running for the Conservative nomination in Halton — former Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner, north Oakville resident Brent Colbert, former Milton and Regional councillor Rick Malboeuf and Milton resident D'Arcy Keene.

Conservative Party members who were signed up by April 28 will be eligible to vote at the event.

A federal election call could come as early as mid-May, with a vote taking place by the end of June.

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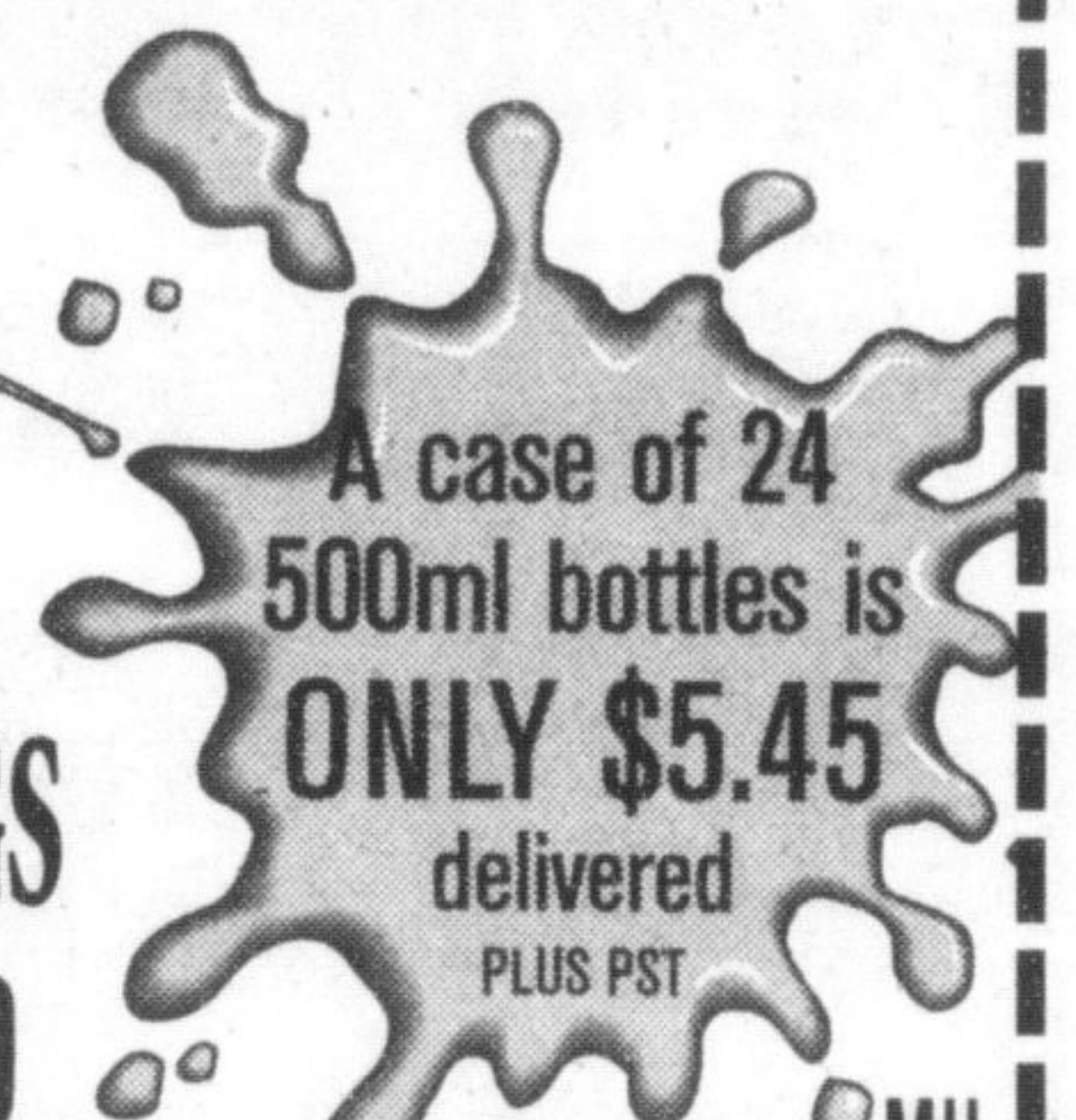


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