

# Proposed LHINS criticized by Regional committee

By Melanie Hennessey  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

A proposed provincial bill designed to provide for an integrated healthcare system came under fire at the Region recently.

The legislation that would give power to the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINS) the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care recently established was discussed and criticized at the health and social services committee meeting.

LHINS are described as community-based organizations with a mandate to plan, co-ordinate, integrate, manage and fund health care at the local level.

Within Halton, there are two LHINS — the Halton-Mississauga LHIN that includes Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville, and the Hamilton-Niagara-Haldimand-Brant LHIN that encompasses Burlington.

Burlington Councillor Rick Craven dubbed the whole LHIN issue as "silly," noting Halton already has a regional council that delivers services on a regional level.

"The real issue here is they're setting up a system that's not elected, not accountable and doesn't need to consult with us in any way," he said.

Regional Chairman Joyce Savoline noted that she's disappointed in the kind of process that's been followed for something "well meaning" like the LHINS.

She noted there was no analysis done on best practices followed already in areas across Ontario. "No one cared to know how a good system worked," she said. "I'm truly disappointed in the way all of this has rolled out."

A staff report to the committee outlined what the LHINS will be responsible for, including:

- Making the health-care system more sustainable.
- Bringing economic efficiencies to the delivery of health services.
- Planning for local health service delivery needs.
- Engaging the community in planning and setting up priorities.
- Developing strategies and co-operating with health service providers.

The LHINS will be responsible for funding and overseeing a variety of health-care service providers, including hospitals, psychiatric facilities, municipalities that maintain homes for the aged, nursing homes and community health centres.

It will not fund individual practitioners or Family Health Teams, ambulance services, laboratories, provincial programs, independent health facilities or public health departments. In Halton, this means that the Region's long-term care, supportive housing and adult day programs will fall under LHIN jurisdiction, along with the North Halton Mental Health Clinic.

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**STRONG OPPOSITION:** CUPE Local 815 members stage a noon-hour information picket line Tuesday out front of the hospital in opposition to the proposed LHINS.

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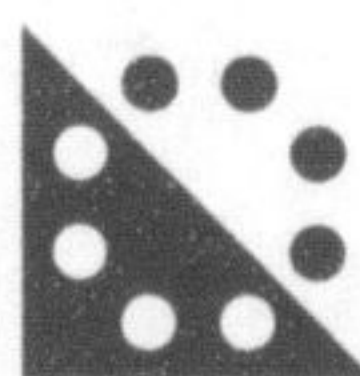
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