

# OPINION

## Off to the races

Milton's fate for the next four years will be in your hands November 13.

On that day, registered voters will decide who will be the next mayor and who will represent Milton's four wards at Town Hall and Halton Region.

Milton voters will also help decide who will follow long-time Regional Chair Joyce Savoline, who's stepping down after her term expires this fall.

Finally, local electors will be asked to select school trustees who make important decisions about education in Halton's public and Catholic schools.

While some of the candidates already registered likely started campaigning months ago, the end of summer has traditionally signalled a sort of unoffi-

cial kickstart to the really serious campaigning. It also means there's less than a month for unregistered candidates to file their nominations. September 29 is the deadline.

So far two candidates want to be mayor — veteran Mayor Gord Krantz and newcomer Gerry Marsh. At Halton Region, the regional chair's position has so far attracted two candidates, former Halton MP Gary Carr and Burlington's Robert Plaschka.

In all of Milton's wards, incumbents are being challenged. And new faces have entered the race, as have some familiar ones who weren't successful at the polls previously.

See the Town's list of registered candidates at [www.milton.ca](http://www.milton.ca).



## ReadersWrite

Send your letters to [miltoneid@haltonsearch.com](mailto:miltoneid@haltonsearch.com) or drop them off at 875 Main St. E.

## We need to stand up and speak out for better health-care service

### DEAR EDITOR:

This letter is in response to Champion editor Karen Miceli's recent column entitled 'Please someone step up and improve our health care'.

I was sorry to hear about Miceli's experience in the hospital. She should know that given the underfunding of hospital services across the GTA and 905 area code, she's not alone.

The GTA/905 Healthcare Alliance — which has no affiliation with hospitals across the GTA and 905 regions — has stepped up to the plate and is working hard to bring better hospital care close to home to the more than three million residents living in Milton and other GTA/905 communities in Durham, Halton, Peel and York.

There are many things growing in the GTA/905:

- The population is growing at more than twice the rate of growth of the province. Each year, the GTA/905 accounts for more than half the population growth in Ontario. These regions grow by more than 100,000 residents each year. That's like plunking down the city of Kingston into the GTA/905 each and every year.

- The taxes GTA/905 residents pay each year are growing. Already some studies show that GTA/905 residents pay out billions of dollars more each year relative to the services they receive. And now, as a result of the Provincial Health Care Tax, GTA/905 residents are paying an additional \$570 million in taxes.

- The gap in funding for health-care services in the GTA/905 is also growing. Since 2003, the per capita funding for hospital services in the GTA/905 has fallen further below the provincial level of per capita funding. In 2003, per capita funding for hospital care in the GTA/905 was \$146 below the provincial average, and as of today is \$182 below. This translates into an

annual funding gap for hospital services in the GTA/905 that has grown from \$540 million in 2003 to \$759 million today.

As a result, GTA/905 residents are waiting longer than other Ontarians for certain health-care services, are far more likely than other Ontarians to have to leave their own communities to get hospital care and have rates of access to hospital care that are lower than Northern Ontario.

To fix this problem, the Alliance — on behalf of GTA/905 residents — is actively calling for the government of Ontario to do three things:

- Provide immediate growth funding to high-growth hospitals (until population-based funding is fully in place).

- Allocate health-care funding to Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) on the basis of population size, characteristics and growth.

- Develop a health-care strategy for Ontario's high-growth regions to complement Places to Grow.

While the Alliance is stepping up to the plate to get action, we need GTA/905 residents to step up with us and raise their voices. To fix this problem and get change, GTA/905 residents need to be heard. GTA/905 residents need to contact their MPPs, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Minister of Finance and Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty. I encourage your readers to visit us at [www.gta905health.com](http://www.gta905health.com) to get more information and to find a convenient way to contact their MPP.

By raising our voices, we can get this problem fixed and help make sure no one else goes through the experience Miceli went through.

**TARIQ ASMI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
GTA/905 HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE**

## Please pick up after your dog

### DEAR EDITOR:

I'd like to raise an issue that I know is very much in the minds of Milton residents. It pertains to pets, specifically dogs, at the Farmers' Market on Saturdays.

I'm referring to those pet owners who allow their dogs to defecate in the middle of the market and refuse to pick up after them. Last Saturday I was one of the unfortunate shoppers who inadvertently stepped on dog excrement on the street.

I believe that any responsible pet owner would appreciate that this isn't simply a matter of esthetics but a matter of public health.

Let me give you an example. Shortly after stepping on the dog excrement, I saw a small child sit by the curb and put down his back bacon sandwich next to him. His parents, not knowing any better, simply picked up the sandwich, wiped it and gave it back to the kid. Can you see my point?

While I'm not asking for pets to be banned from the market, I would like to ask the Town or the Region to post bylaw enforcement officers or health inspectors at the market and severely fine those irresponsible pet owners who refuse to pick up after their pets.

Their actions are ruining what has become a regular family outing for us.

**MAURICE RIVAS  
MILTON**

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