

# Region wants Province to improve on social services

By Melanie Hennessey  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

The Region is calling on the Province to improve the way it funds health and social services in the GTA.

At its meeting last week, regional council passed a motion supporting recommendations to Queen's Park on what can be done to help municipalities deal with growth pressures facing everything from child care to hospital services.

The suggestions council endorsed, which were originally put forward in a report from the Strong Communities Coalition, ask the Province to:

- Immediately provide growth funding for health and social services in the GTA/905 regions of Durham, Halton, Peel and York.
- Revise the way funding is allocated for health and social services across Ontario so that it's distributed on the basis of population size, growth and characteristics.
- Develop a health and social services strategy for Ontario's high-growth regions to complement the Places to Grow plan in consultation with GTA/905 stakeholders,

including members of the Strong Communities Coalition.

"There is no doubt that health and social service providers are feeling very stretched to meet the increasing needs in the community," said Halton Commissioner of Social and Community Services Adelina Urbanski. "If these recommendations are acted on, it would improve the capacity of Halton Region and non-profit agencies to meet that growing demand."

The Strong Communities Coalition's report contains the findings of a recent audit completed by PricewaterhouseCoopers that shows there's a large and growing gap between funding the GTA receives for health and social services compared to the rest of Ontario.

The document explains the inequity has come about because "funding is primarily allocated on the basis of historical patterns. Population growth and demographics are generally not being considered."

In fact, the audit found the annual funding gap for provincially-funded social services in the GTA has grown over the last several years to more than \$550 million, while in health care the gap is over \$900 million.

More specifically, GTA residents receive \$181 less per per-

son for social services, and \$246 less per person for health care services compared to the average Ontarian.

"The report demonstrates that provincial funding for health and social services in the GTA/905 are not keeping pace with the population growth taking place in Halton Region," said Regional Chair Gary Carr.

"While Halton is taking a proactive approach in including health and social service issues in its response to Places to Grow through the Durable Halton Plan, we urge the provincial government to take action along with the federal government in coming up with solutions to fix the funding gap."

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## BUYER BEWARE: 13 Extra Costs to Be Aware of Before Buying a Home

**HALTON** - Whether you're looking to buy your first home, or trading up to a larger one, there are many costs - on top of the purchase price - that you must figure into your calculation of affordability. These extra fees, such as taxes and other additional costs, could surprise you with an unwanted financial nightmare on closing day if you're not informed and prepared.

Some of these costs are one-time fixed payments, while others represent an ongoing monthly or yearly commitment. While not all of these costs will apply in every situation, it's better to know about them ahead of time so you can budget properly.

Remember, buying a home is a major milestone, and whether it's your first, second, or tenth, there are many small but important details, not to mention stress and excitement, to deal with during the process. The last thing you need are unbudgeted financial obligations in the hours before you take possession of your new home.

To help homebuyers understand what these extra costs are, and in what situations they may apply, a free industry report has been prepared called "13 Extra Costs to Be Aware of Before Buying a Home".

To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your FREE copy of this report, call 1-877-617-1275 and enter ID #3008. You can call any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or visit us online at [www.halton13extracosts.com](http://www.halton13extracosts.com)

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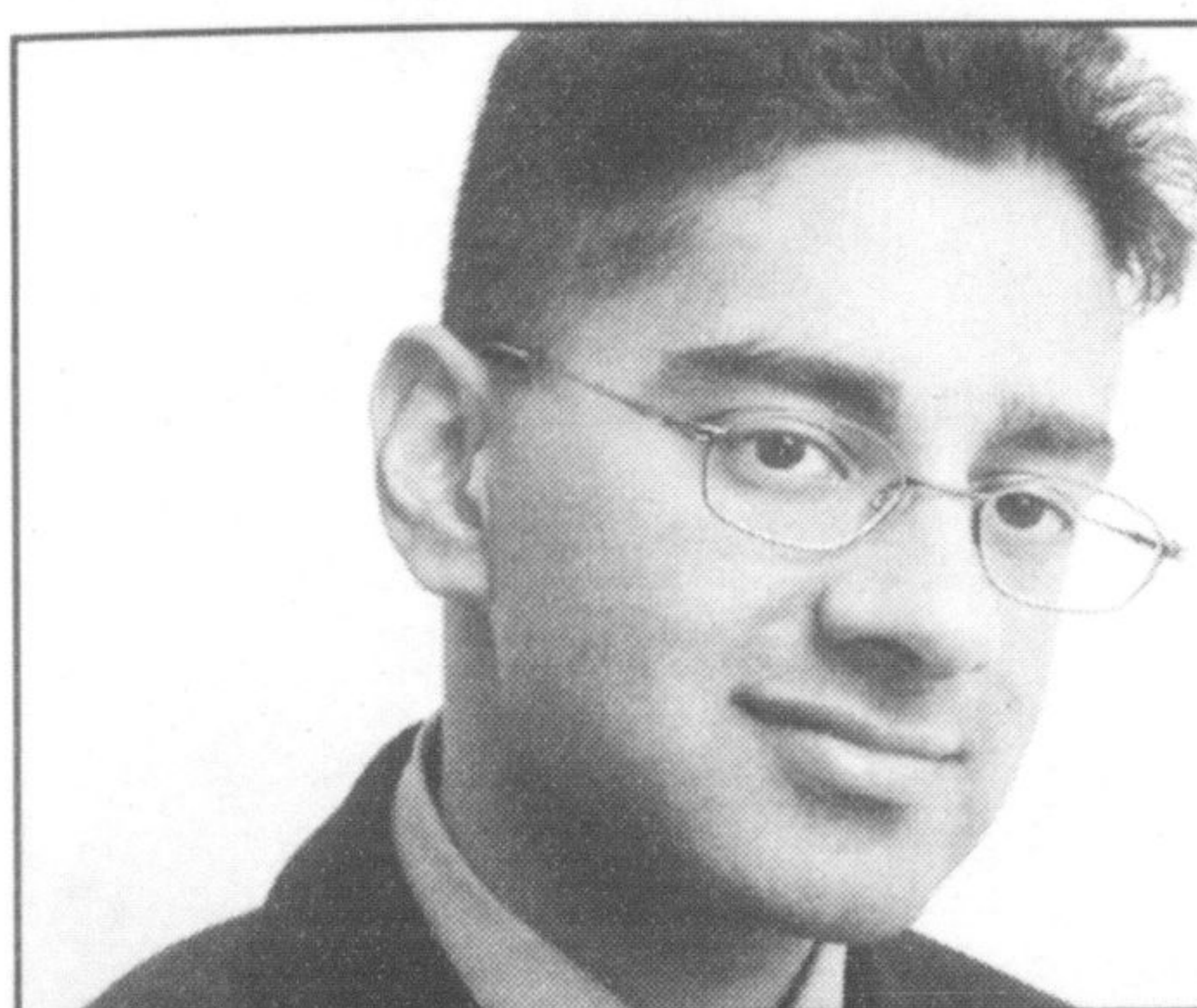
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