

OPINION

What's up doc?

Now's the perfect time to give your doctor a big pat on the back

Have you hugged your doctor lately? If not, you might want to at least give him or her a pat on the back for a job well done following the recent celebration of Halton Physician Appreciation Week.

As we all know, good doctors are hard to come by even though Halton Region has been working feverishly (no pun intended) to attract physicians to this area.

The Halton Physician Recruitment Initiative was established in 2003 to address this region's shortage of family doctors. To date, more than 60 new family physicians have established a practice here.

The initiative is a collaborative effort between Halton Region, local municipalities, physicians, senior area hospital staff and the community.

The Region's physician recruitment co-ordinator, Angela Sugden Praysner, said retaining doctors in Halton is just as important as recruiting them here.

"Like everyone else, doctors appreciate knowing that their efforts are recognized. We want them to spread the word to their colleagues that Halton Region is a welcoming and rewarding place to live and to practice medicine," said Sugden Praysner.

The provincial government, too, recognizes the urgent need to recruit more family physicians.

A centre set up to help foreign-trained medical professionals land a job here recently marked an important milestone. Since the Access Centre for Internationally Educated Health Professionals opened in December 2006, 67 of their International Medical Graduate (IMG) clients have been accepted to a medical residency program in Ontario.

That number is impressive, since many residents in Ontario face a doctor shortage and far too many highly-skilled immigrants are working in menial jobs.

"People in this province need better access to physicians," said George Smitherman, Ontario health minister.

We couldn't agree more.

As the baby boomers continue to age, the pressure on the provincial health-care system will become even greater. Many doctors are looking toward retirement as well, and we suspect that within the next five to 10 years the need for physicians could reach the critical stage.



ReadersWrite

E-mail your letters to editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

Theft of flower pots disappointing

DEAR EDITOR:

In the spirit of spring, we recently placed four lovely pots of pansies in front of our Main Street business.

The blooms were placed in colourful pastel tin buckets that many of our customers commented on. It was our way of bringing a smile to those of us who are enjoying the nice weather after a very long winter.

On May 16, all four pansy buckets were stolen. It's really unfortunate that there are spring-time scrooges in our charming town of Milton.

Our store stays open until 8 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays, so it would be much appreciated if the flowers are returned sometime after closing.

ANITA MANGOTICH
HALTON HILLS JEWELLERY

Theviewfromhere

Even simplest of tasks can be a challenge in a wheelchair

I can now tell you without a doubt that I take my ability to walk for granted.

Last weekend, I spent the afternoon confined to a wheelchair to experience first-hand what it's like as part of the Town's National Access Awareness Week celebration at the Milton Sports Centre.

The Town provided me with a good, old-fashioned manual wheelchair, and I'll admit my task got-off to a bit of a rocky start.

As I took my first roll forward my notebook and pen slid off my lap and fell on the floor. With nowhere else to put my pad, I ended up sitting on it and wondering what other people who are in wheelchairs every day do with their personal belongings.

After I mastered steering the chair left, right and backward, I thought it was time to challenge myself a bit more. So I decided I would embark on a trip down the wheelchair

ramp to the bathroom.

Fearing that I would go flying out of control down the ramp, I recruited Town staff member Hazel Carlin to accompany me for safety.

Amazingly, I managed to get down the ramp all right, but when it came time to open the bathroom door I couldn't quite figure it out.

I attempted to back my chair up into the door with the hope it would open, but it didn't budge, so Hazel came to my rescue.

Once in the bathroom stall, I tried to overcome my next hurdle — getting from the wheelchair to the toilet.

I attempted to position the chair so that I could use the handle on the wall to hoist myself over, but realized I was cheating as my

feet hit the floor to help me out.

It was fairly simple to wash and dry my hands because the sinks and air dryers are positioned quite low, but I had to try a few times to get out the bathroom door as I wasn't taking a wide enough turn to do so without crushing my fingers on the door frame.

Unfortunately my trip back up the ramp wasn't as smooth as the ride down, so once again Hazel helped me out and gave me a push.

My next challenge came when I ordered some food at the concession stand. With fries in one hand and a bottle of water in the other, I pondered how I was going to get myself from the concession over to the ice



Melanie Hennessey

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The Canadian Champion
Milton's Community Newspaper Since 1860

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Editorial Fax: 905-878-4943
Advertising Fax: 905-876-2364
Classified: 905-875-3300
Circulation: 905-878-5947
www.miltoncanadianchampion.com

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The Canadian Champion, published every Tuesday and Friday, is a division of Metroland Media Group Ltd. — Group Publisher Ian Oliver.

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