

# OPINION

## Lack of help for our youth unacceptable

A bleak picture — when it comes to the mental state of Halton's youth — was presented to Halton Region's health and social services committee recently.

It's bad enough that one in five Ontario children struggles with an emotional, mental or behavioural disorder, but if you add to that this region's atrocious wait times for services you have a recipe for disaster.

The dire predicament of children's mental health services (or lack thereof) was presented to the Region by Ron Rodgers, executive director of the Reach Out Centre for Kids, known as ROCK.

Rodgers said in his presentation that fewer than 25 per cent of kids with mental health issues are treated.

Fewer than 25 per cent?

That's not acceptable.

Wait times range anywhere from three months for ROCK's community out-reach program to a year for its psychology services, occupational therapy and behaviour management program.

A year's wait?

That's not acceptable.

ROCK receives funding from the Province, Region and United Way. It says it needs at least \$1 million more for upgraded salaries and annualized cost of living.

You have got to believe that with this region's unprecedented growth, the demand for such services will also increase at an alarming rate.

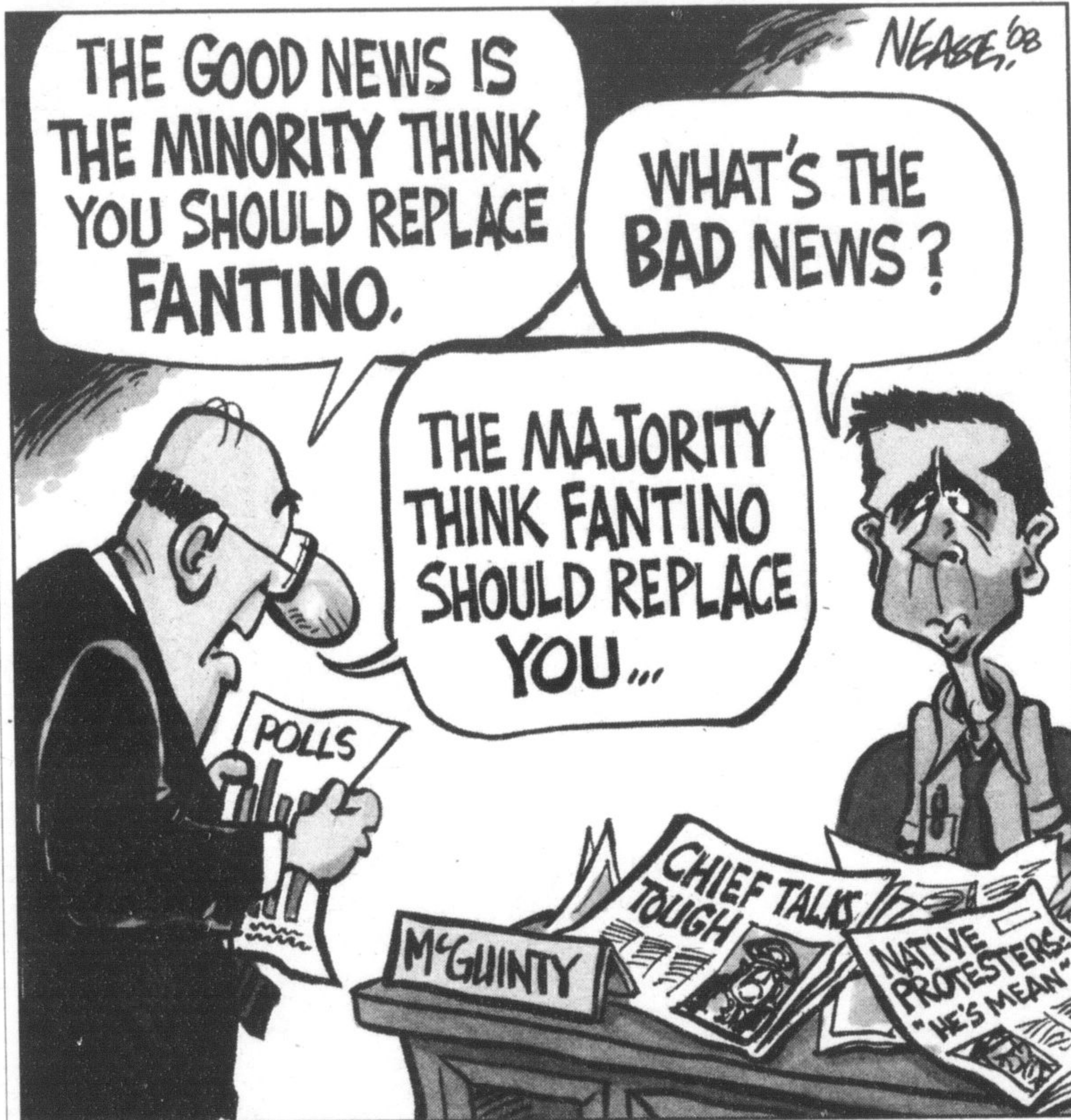
Oakville Councillor Fred Oliver has asked staff to report back on the creation of a task force to deal with youth mental health issues.

"We need to have the guts to get up and do something," he said.

We couldn't agree more. Why wait for a staff report? Why not create the task force now?

The youth of today are our future. Halton is a prosperous municipality. We can, and should, do better. The private sector, as well as all levels of government, must team together to ensure our youth receive the care they deserve.

Now that would be acceptable.



## ReadersWrite

E-mail your letters to [editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com).

### Too many negative stories on front

DEAR EDITOR:

We seem to have lost our small-town charm.

Our family recently went on vacation and of course wanted to take our hometown newspaper with us to take our *Champion Tracks* photo.

Unfortunately, for weeks leading up to our vacation, all of the front pages looked more like something from the front page of a popular newspaper from the big city to the east of us.

Have we lost our small-town charm now that all the news on the front page has to be negative sensationalism — death, drugs, car crashes, etc.?

It's sad to see our small-town paper changing like this when there are so many positive accomplishments being achieved by residents that seem to get pushed to the back pages.

MICHAEL BARATTO  
MARTIN STREET

## Editor'sdesk

### Both my car and my wallet are running out of gas

It's time to take matters into our own hands. It's time for a gas revolt.

I wonder how a major decline in gas sales would affect prices at the pumps? We won't know until we try.

While I'm sure Canadians aren't buying as much gas as they used to simply because it's just not as affordable, I don't think we're sending a strong enough message.

I'm not talking about anything drastic like trying to get along without our cars or going out and buying a motorcycle. I mean, seriously, aren't there a lot of ways to cut back on gas usage?

• A big one I see is right in front of us. August is coming soon and it's probably the biggest month for summer vacationing. How about for this year, try staying close to home? I hear it's called 'Staytripping.'

The GTA and even Milton have lots of

destinations for fun in the sun. People come from afar to enjoy places like Kelso and Rattlesnake Point conservation areas, so why not make the trip ourselves? Many new residents probably have never been to these places. Let's explore our own backyard.

• My next suggestion is simple. Don't drive if you don't have to — kind of like during a really bad winter storm. If it's not imperative to go out, just stay home. Plan an event like a barbecue with your neighbours and everyone bring something. Hopefully, somebody has a pool. Use modern technology to stay in touch with friends and family instead of travelling.

• Plan ahead with grocery shopping and other errands so you can combine all your

small trips into one. Shop where you can get everything you need, or do without unless it's a necessity.

• Perhaps the best way to avoid the pumps is by using public transportation or car pooling, especially to get to work. Driving for employment has got to be the biggest gas guzzler and difficult to curtail since we all need our jobs. This one is vital.

If everyone took these measures, even just for the short term, think of the impact they could have. Think of how a situation where "they pretty much got ya" could turn in our favour.

I'm willing to give it a try. How about you? Karen Miceli can be reached at [KMiceli@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:KMiceli@miltoncanadianchampion.com).



Karen Miceli

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