## Long-term-care wait expected to get longer

By Stephanie Hounsell CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

A year's wait to get into a long-term care facility and the possibility of being placed far from home has some seniors worried and regional councillors expressing frustration.

The topic was on the table at Tuesday's regional health and social services committee.

A staff report said hospitals want to discharge patients who are going to a long-term-care (LTC) home as soon as room is available to free up hospital beds — but that can lead to a stressful situation for the seniors and their families.

"Those waiting in hospital are being told that if they do not take the available LTC bed they will be charged up to \$700 per day," the report states. "Seniors are then forced to move to LTC homes that are not their choice and commonly a long distance from their loved ones."

Sometimes, the report states, their spouses can't drive anymore and can't easily visit them at the facility.

If a senior in the community needs urgent admission, it's the same situation. They must take the first bed available, no matter where it is within the catchment area of the Mississauga-Halton Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), the report states. That means a Milton senior could be placed in a home in Mississauga or even south Etobicoke.

Once there they can transfer, but that can involve a wait of over two years since they're no longer a priority, the report states.

An initiative by the Province and Local Health Integration Networks is seeking to address this situation, but it's too soon to tell if it's helping.

For seniors not designated as "urgent," the wait for placement can be more than a year to get into one of the three homes owned and operated by Halton Region (Allendale in Milton, Post Inn Village in Oakville and Creek Way Village in Burlington); they're able to choose which home they go to.

The admission process is co-ordinated by CCACs and Local Health Integration Networks.

Adelina Urbanski, commissioner of social and community services, said the issue of LTC home delays and the fact seniors who need care urgently can't decide where they end up is an increasing one.

Milton Councillor Colin Best said the lack of LTC home beds is affecting our already-burdened hospitals.

"A number of people who are in critical care in the hospital should be in long-term care," he told fellow committee members.

In Milton, the situation is made worse by renovations at Allendale, which has led to a temporary reduction in admissions in order to have 25 empty beds.

Burlington Councillor Rick Goldring gave the example of see MEETING on page A20





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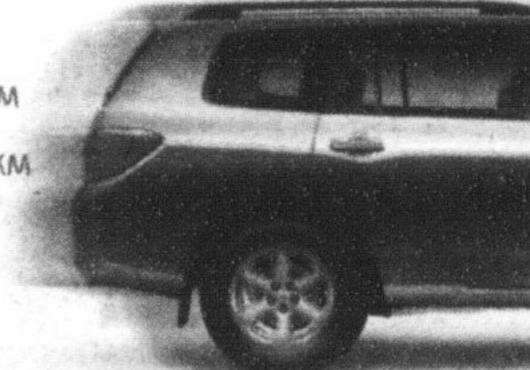
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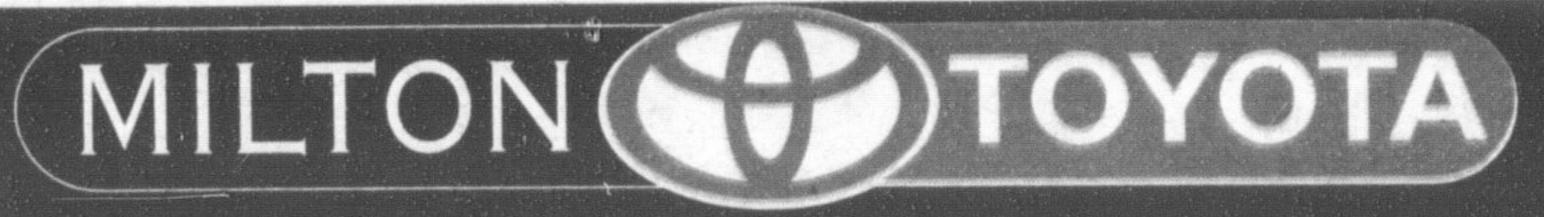


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