

Concern raised that funding could set precedent

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the address is a development site of Westbury International. Michael DeGroot is president of the company.

McMaster has also received a \$10 million donation for the project by Ron Joyce, co-founder of Tim Hortons.

Along with the business school, McMaster spokesperson Dr. David Price said it plans to build a family health centre in downtown Burlington, which would be the centre of education for family doctors doing their residencies at hospitals and clinics.

McMaster also plans to partner with Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital to turn the facility into a teaching hospital, where family doctors could do intensive training in areas such as obstetrics, surgery and pediatrics, said Price.

Funding for post-secondary education and capital projects falls generally under the responsibility of the Province of Ontario. Halton Hills Councillor Jane Fogal raised concern at Wednesday's meeting that the Region's grant could set a precedent and lead to future requests for municipal money from other provincially-funded institutions.

Regional Chair Gary Carr has also led a campaign over much of his term arguing for the Province to upload some of the costs for health and social services currently paid for in part by the Region. He has also called for the Province to speed up funding for new or expanded hospitals in the region to meet Halton's rapid population growth.

After the meeting, Carr defended his vote to approve funding for McMaster, saying it should be viewed as money for physician recruitment, which Halton already pays for.

"The Region has always done health promotion. As part of health promotion, this

will help us to get the doctors we need."

Halton currently has a shortage of about 30 family doctors. Burlington, Halton Hills and Milton are designated areas underserved by family doctors by the Ministry of health and Halton submitted an application for Oakville to receive the same designation last year.

Over the past six years, the Region has spent about \$1 million on its physician recruitment program, which has managed to attract more than 70 family doctors. However, population growth and the retirement of older doctors who worked long hours mean the Region has only reduced its shortage by 10 over that time span.

Neither McMaster nor Halton staff were able to say what the exact impact of a new family health clinic in Burlington would have on the region's doctor shortage. But the staff report said some studies show up to 75 per cent of doctors stay in the region where they did their residency.

"We think this is taking a major step in getting the doctors we need," Carr said.

Though Halton's funding is tied to the business school, the recommendation includes targets that McMaster must meet in order to receive each year's funding allotment. These include "specific operational targets" for the placement of family medical residents in all communities in Halton. Exactly what that target — the number of family doctors that set up shop in Halton following their residency training — will be is still in negotiation, said Carr. Council won't have firm figures to review before voting on the proposal on Wednesday, he added.

During Wednesday's administration and finance committee meeting, Vogal expressed a desire to possibly fund the family health

aspect of McMaster's proposal but not the business school. However, Vishniac said McMaster couldn't separate the two and one couldn't go forward without the other.

McMaster is looking to place many of its business programs with a health sciences management focus in the Burlington campus, explained DeGroot School of Business Dean Paul Bates.

McMaster has submitted its Burlington proposal to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities as one of its capital project priorities. The Ministry collected such priorities from Ontario universities last year and said it is reviewing the proposals.

The Province announced a \$60 billion, infrastructure renewal program in last year's budget that will begin after its Renew infrastructure program ends in 2010.

Vishniac said the maximum amount it could get from the province for its Burlington project would be \$28 million so it still requires municipal funds.

McMaster's campus is one of two post-secondary proposals in Halton Region. Milton and Wilfrid Laurier University have a

preliminary agreement in place for the university to locate a campus in the town.

Laurier spokesman Kevin Crowley said the university has also submitted the first phase of the new campus to the Province as one of its capital priorities. The initial part, which would accommodate 2,500 students, would cost an estimated \$258.7 million, said Crowley, and Laurier is seeking \$241.5 million of that money from the Province. About \$15 million would be received from the Town of Milton in the form of 150 acres of land for the school and \$2.2 million would come from developers who would cover servicing costs. No other funding has been requested from the Town or Halton, said Crowley.

The first phase proposal is comprised of a library/learning commons, a central academic building and an administrative building, said Crowley. Laurier's long term plans foresee a second phase with 5,000 students and third phase with 7,500 students, which could double in the long term, he added.

Tim Foran can be reached at tforan@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

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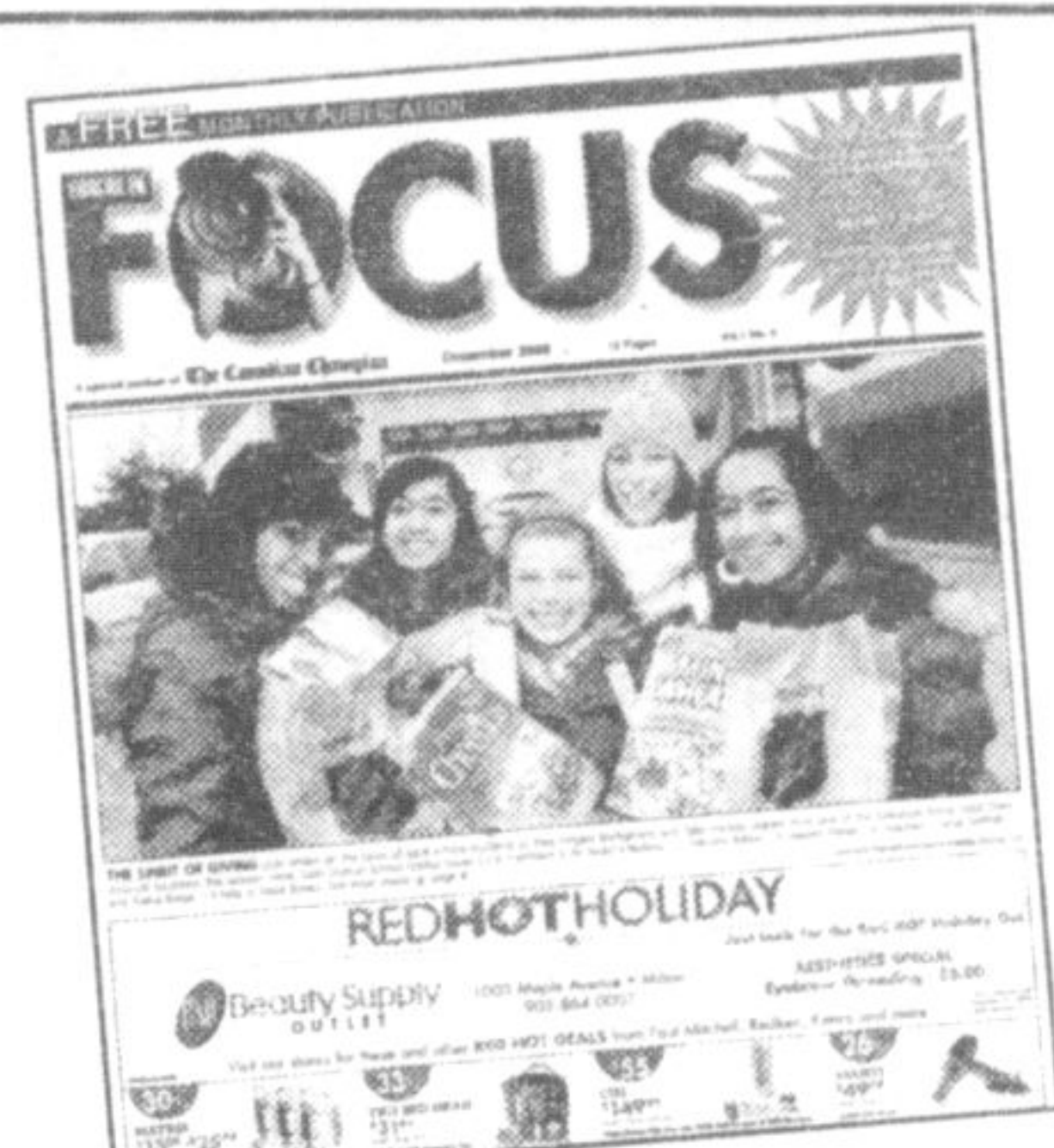
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