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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

OPSEU members picketed Sunday out of concern for a proposed move of 100 beds from Allendale to south Halton. Plans for the new facility include a private sector partnership with Halton Region.

Protesters say seniors being sold out by gov't

By STEVE LeBLANC
Special to The Champion

"Private Not Public" and "Save our Seniors" were among the messages put out Sunday at Allendale, by a small but spirited group rallying around the Milton home for the aged.

Roughly 30 supporters braved chilly afternoon temperatures to voice their concern over a plan to remove about 100 long-term care beds from Martin House and turn them over to a private sector partner in south Halton.

"Our main concern is that if these beds become privatized the care won't be there, that it'll be all for money. They're selling our seniors to the highest bidder," said Pat Heroux, president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), Local 261. A health care aide at the Milton home for the past 31 years, Ms Heroux was joined by fellow Allendale employees as well as supporters from both Milton and Oakville.

"We already lack beds at Allendale. We need additional beds, not less. A move to a private partnership would not only make seniors' care much more expensive, but

also mean a loss of about 100 jobs in Milton which will have an economic impact on the community.

"In the 31 years I've been working here, I've seen seniors' care come full circle. It's improved tremendously over the years but now I see it going back to the way it was."

The afternoon rally was held the same day Allendale celebrated its annual Christmas tea. Family members of local seniors were given pamphlets, outlining the government's plan for seniors' care.

The pamphlet reads: "A private corporation is not accountable to the aged, to those who feed, change and interact with the residents, or to the taxpayers who provide the funding. Their accountability is to their shareholders, not to the people in the home." It calls for Halton residents to voice their concerns to Halton Chair Joyce Savoljine, Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh and the provincial health minister.

Oakville and District Labor Council
see WORKERS on page 13

Future murky

from ALLENDALE on page 3

still be ultimately responsible."

Currently the province is studying all long term care facilities with an eye to reallocating funding. Halton has one of the lowest beds to population counts in Ontario, however the study is expected to take several more months and any action is realistically several years away, according to Ms Ewart.

She said people moving to the new southern facility would not be just those people currently living in Martin House, everyone at Allendale would be given the opportunity.

"The new facility will not be cheaper, not as accessible or accountable," said Ms Mussett. "Private facilities are accountable only to their shareholders. There are only so many dollars coming from the operating funds and profits must come from that money."

Ms Mussett said that moving is not an option for some of the staff. She said OPSEU would continue to keep the pressure on and was attempting to schedule a meeting with Mayor Gord Krantz.

Ms Ewart added that Martin House could be remodeled into seniors apartments, which would let more independent seniors take advantage of some of the programs at Allendale, or it could be refurbished and maintained as a long term care facility, but only if the province provided operating funds.

GEORGE CHUVALO BRINGS HIS SPECIAL MESSAGE TO HALTON

HELP HIM DELIVER A KNOCKOUT PUNCH TO DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTION

An organization called **YOUR TURNING POINT** was formed back in January of 1995 and has been working toward the goal of a residential facility for Halton Region as a location for people involved and perhaps hooked on drugs or alcohol, to go to for help in recovering from that world.

The difference is that this is for teenagers - actually between the ages of 12 and 18, who are perhaps out of the family residence, or appearing there parttime, are on the outs with family and society, who are perhaps 'on the streets' and have nowhere to turn to get assistance, advice, or maybe just need someone to talk to.

This project has been spearheaded by Denise Mule. In order to gain some recognition for **YOUR TURNING POINT** Denise, in conjunction with Bruce Hood, local businessman and former NHL referee, has arranged for George Chualo, former world renowned boxer and someone who has experienced first hand the ramifications drug and alcohol addiction can have on a family, to come to Milton on **Wednesday, December 17th** at the **Glenn Hall at Memorial Arena** at 7:00pm.

This is the first stage of a plan to have him come back again in late February or early March to talk in many of the schools across Halton. Ultimately a fund raising night for the program is planned prior to March Break.

For more information see next weeks Champion.

This message is brought to you by "Your Turning Point", Millerin Aggregates and The Milton Champion