



## A Message To Our Patients

Due to the severe snow storm, Markham Stouffville Hospital cancelled non-urgent and non-emergent elective surgeries, outpatient clinics and procedures (with a few exceptions) on January 15, 1999.

The cancellations were part of the hospital's plan to ensure sufficient staff were available to provide services to emergency patients and inpatients during the storm.

Every effort will be made to reschedule appointments as quickly as possible. We greatly appreciate the support and cooperation of the patients affected by the cancellations.

James R. MacLean  
Interim President & CEO

# School openings prompt flurry of parental complaints

BY JENNIFER BROWN  
STAFF WRITER

The decision by both York Region school boards to stay open Friday was not well received by many parents.

Roads were deemed safe for school buses serving both boards Friday, even though they were cancelled Thursday. Cold temperatures Thursday meant many buses wouldn't start.

"When one-quarter of the fleet wouldn't start, that meant a potential delay in getting to 6,000 students and skin was flash freezing in two minutes that day," said Brian Jamieson, public relations officer for the public board.

But buses ran Friday, even though all of the other boards in the Greater Toronto Area closed their schools. That decision angered many parents and teachers, who felt the roads were not in shape for school bus travel.

The boards waited until Friday morning to decide whether buses would run, while other boards announced cancellations early Thursday night.

"I can't believe they did this," said Unionville

parent Sharon Crossan, who has two children attending St. Matthew Separate School on Waterbridge Lane. "There are no students on the buses."

Her children are able to walk to school, but she was concerned about their safety on the snowy streets. "Are we crazy up here?" Crossan asked. "I don't think it's safe and we're putting the children at risk."

Richmond Hill's Esther Marks, who picks her grandchildren up from Silver Pines Public School, agreed. "York Region is behind the times, they have an antiquated policy."

But Jamieson said York Region roads were deemed passable for school buses, despite the conditions left by Thursday's storm. "We check weather conditions and did our own inspection of the roads and Toronto was really hit harder. It may be sloppy and there may be delays, but there was really no reason to cancel," he said.

The criteria for cancelling buses requires that snow must be 25 cm deep, roads icy and/or persistent -25 degree Celsius wind chill conditions.

—with files from Alan Shackleton

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