

Hospital funds not enough

York Region health officials welcome province's cash, but say they need much more

BY DAWN LIERSCH
Staff Writer

York's cash-strapped hospital officials are breathing a sigh of relief with the promise of an annual funding boost from the province, but they're also hoping more is still to come.

York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill is to receive \$12.1 million, followed by York County Hospital in Newmarket with \$10.2 million and Markham-Stouffville Hospital with \$6.1 million, as part of the province's move to beef up Ontario hospital budgets by \$435 million.

... we start the year out with a deficit and then are constantly faced with challenges — so what do you do?

Most of the money is one-time funding, which hospitals received last year, now converted into annual cash injections, along with some new funding.

And although York hospital officials say they had already counted on the funding this year, they stress it's a relief to know the dollars will keep rolling in each year.

"It's nice to know the one-time funding will be part of the base funding," said Dr. Jim MacLean, president of Markham-Stouffville Hospital.

"We had hoped for it, but there was always an uncertainty you had to live by."

But MacLean suggested the money will barely make a dent in the hospital's \$6.3-million deficit, because he had already anticipated getting the money and had factored it into this year's budget. Only \$865,400 of Markham-Stouffville Hospital's \$6.1-million cash injection is new funding.

The question is, we continue to see more patients and need new funding — we start the year out with a deficit and then are constantly faced with challenges — so what do you do?" MacLean said.

"We have to just continue taking care of people and hope the (health) minister funds the areas that need funding over the course of the year."

MacLean said the hospital's deficit is almost double what it was last year due to increased patient volume, staff wage settlements and inflation.

York County Hospital is in a similar predicament. In fact, hospital president Dan Carriere said the funding falls short of what he was expecting. When preparing his budget, he had anticipated receiving \$12 million from the province.

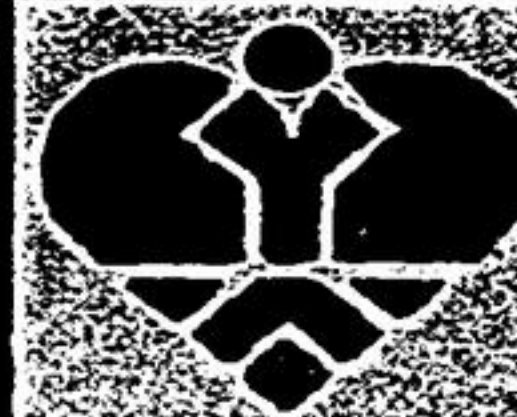
Only \$1.2 million of York County's \$10.2-million cash injection is new funding.

"It's a little short of what we were expecting. We're hoping there will be

more ... We know the minister is aware of how busy the hospital is and how the population is growing," he said, explaining he's struggling to reduce the hospital's \$10-million deficit, due mainly to the hiring of new staff, union contracts and inflation.

"At least it's a comfort to know we will be getting the (permanent) funding," Carriere said.

York Central Hospital public affairs director Melina Cormier also said news of the funding was a relief, but the money had already been anticipated during budget deliberations.



York Region Children's Aid Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting for York Region Children's Aid Society will be held on Thursday, June 22, 2000 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town of Markham offices at 101 Town Centre Blvd. Markham, Ontario. Everyone welcome, RSVP 1-800-718-3850, extension 201.

YOU COULD WIN!

Most of you know that I'm a baseball nut and many of you are aware (or play in) the Unionville Slo-Pitch league. Well, we have an Annual Fund Raising Golf Tournament among our members and those of the 'over 40' Wednesday night league. All proceeds being donated to the Markham-Stouffville Hospital. This year, as in the last two years, the **VILLAGE GROCER** is sponsoring the tournament and in conjunction with it, we will be arranging a raffle with the following prizes:

- * One year of grocery shopping in our store that is \$100.00 per week for a year!
- * The use of a Chrysler P.T. Cruiser for a year donated by Longmans. (One condition is that you must be 21)
- * A Compaq laptop computer, donated by Compaq.
- * A set of awesome golf clubs, a bag and lessons from Angus Glen Golf Club.
- * An eating tour of Unionville. This is a set of five \$100.00 vouchers from The Arms, Blacksmith Bistro, Pineapple Inn, The School and Il Postino.

Raffle tickets are \$10.00 each and are available from all the ball players of the league, from **VILLAGE GROCER**, from any of the restaurants listed and from Longman's Chrysler. All of the proceeds will be donated to the hospital — last year we raised \$35,000.00.

Thanks for your support.
Evan MacDonald



For more details call
905-940-1770



The Markham Lions Club wishes to thank the community for their support in our Spring Flower Sale fundraising project. We sold a record number of flowers this year and were able to raise over \$10,000. These funds will be used towards our major commitments to organizations such as Markhaven, the Markham Museum & Markham Stouffville Hospital.



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