

Cuts will hurt region's most vulnerable, say agencies

BY LISA QUEEN
Staff Writer

York Region's most vulnerable residents — the elderly, frail and ill — are suffering under a plan to cut back on homecare services, dozens of representatives from healthcare agencies complained this week.

But while officials with the Community Care Access Centre, which oversees homecare service across York, say they sympathize, they warned without more funding there is little they can do to help.

Bill Innes, chief executive of the centre, told the 70 agency representatives who met in Richmond Hill yesterday the province confirmed last week his budget is being frozen at \$49.9 million.

The centre had asked for \$62.2 million, leaving a shortfall of \$12.3 million.

The extra funding is needed to address the needs of York Region's growing and aging population, said Innes, who pointed out York's centre received the second lowest per capita funding in the province.

But the Tory government announced in its May budget funding in access centres

across Ontario will be capped at last year's levels.

Agencies that provide home care services, however, say clients are suffering under the cuts.

"I have great concerns about what is happening in the community," said a York Region Alzheimer's Society spokesperson, who didn't want to be identified.

"I know people are falling through the cracks," the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, because service is now geared only to highest priority cases, other agencies say their clients are being neglected.

One woman complained patients with long-term complex needs, such as people with neurological damage, no longer rate high enough to get care.

But Joan Doran, vice-president of the centre said her organization doesn't have much choice.

"We share your concerns. We didn't want to do this. We cannot serve the full population that we used to."

Comments from the agencies will be incorporated into a report going from the Simcoe/York District Health Council to Health Minister Tony Clement this fall.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

OKAY, SHOW ME THE LIFESAVING EQUIPMENT...

Children from St. James Presbyterian Church summer bible camp enjoyed a visit of Whitchurch-Stouffville firefighters on Tuesday. In the picture firefighter Mark Busse asks campers to point out lifesaving equipment. They are from left: Teddy Dinsmore, 10; Ryan Mason, 11; Alice Donoghue, 10; Lauren Elliott, 10; Christy Russell, 9; and Jonathan Stellan, 11.



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McCowan Road (Y.R. 67) will be closed to through traffic between Bur Oak Avenue and Major Mackenzie Drive East from 7:00 p.m. August 24th, 2001 to 6:00 a.m. August 27th, 2001, to facilitate adjustments to existing watermain.

By-Law No. R-1217-2000-046

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