

# Ottawa not contributing enough: Klees

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care in the region, which battled the province over funding for much of last year.

The report concluded "health care providers are doing their best to respond to rapid growth and local patterns of demand, but were falling behind because health care providers are still catching up to historical underfunding."

With a population of 800,000 expected to hit 1.2 million in 20 years, York's per capita hospital funding for 1999-2000 was \$261.80 compared to a provincial average of \$657.50 and \$713.20 for the rest of the Greater Toronto Area.

Meanwhile, per capita mental health funding was \$6.60 in York compared to the \$17.50 provincial average.

York received a \$23.03 per capita allowance for public health funding, almost \$6 less than the provincial average, and \$64.30 per capita for home care funding compared to the provincial average of \$92.70.

But while Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees, who hasn't seen the report, said York's provincial politicians have successfully lobbied for more funding for the rapidly growing region, he also questioned the report's results.

He pointed out an annual health report in Maclean's magazine this month showed the communities of Markham and Richmond Hill have jumped six places in health care ratings compared to other areas across Canada. Northern York Region wasn't ranked in the study.

Markham/Richmond Hill, grouped as one community in the report, ranked 12 out of 54 centres across the country, up from its standing of 18 last year.

Mr. Klees has also sent a letter to the region's three hospital presidents asking them to detail steps they have taken to improve efficiency and co-operation before he goes to bat for them in seeking more provincial funding.



**BRYON WILFERT:** Provinces shouldn't blame Ottawa for all health care problems.

On the other hand, he argued the federal Liberals aren't contributing their share toward health care, leaving provinces to shoulder a crippling load.

This month's provincial budget, for example, saw Ontario's spending on health care jump to \$25.5 billion annually or 47 per cent of the province's expenses.

However, Oak Ridges Liberal MP Bryon Wilfert has accused provincial politicians of trying to mislead the public by blaming Ottawa for all of Canada's health care problems.

He said his government

kicked in an additional \$21.1 billion over five years toward health care after premiers insisted in September 2000 that's the funding they required.

Vaughan Councillor Joyce Frustaglio, a member of the region's health care funding task force and co-chairperson of the human services coalition, believes its time for provincial and federal politicians to stop bickering and contribute the funding York health care providers require to meet the growing region's needs.

"If we received the funding we deserve, then it

would be wonderful news.

"The intent of this initiative is first and foremost to let the province know we just want our fair share," she said.

"The Region of York has been systematically underfunded for a number of years.

"All we're saying is it's time for the province to recognize the injustice in that. And the feds as well.

"It's no longer acceptable to us as the Region of York and I don't believe it's acceptable to residents. Our constituents are their constituents."

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