

Cancer facility is York's top hospital priority

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communities.

Dr. MacLean said a tri-hospital committee, made up of York's hospital presidents, chiefs of staff and board chairpersons, will focus in early 2003 on ensuring residents have the medical services they need in the future. Establishing a cancer care facility is top priority.

"We know there is an infrastructure deficit. We have not kept pace with growth," Dr. MacLean said.

"We really want to take a leadership role and take a real stand for York Region."

Markham Stouffville Hospital is already providing a wide range of community hospital services and specialized programs.

For example, through a partnership with the York Region Pre-School Speech and Language Program, the hospital offers an infant hearing screening and communications program for the regions of York, Durham, Kawartha and Peterborough.

Meanwhile, in what is believed to be a first in Ontario, this year the hospital and community agencies launched a program aimed at preventing frail seniors from falling through the cracks of the health and social safety net.

Seniors First, which will eventually become a regional program, will focus on seniors who show up at the hospital's emergency room but don't require admission. The program will make sure seniors receive support through community agencies.

Markham Stouffville is now pressuring

the province to approve an ambitious \$120-million expansion plan.

In fact, in a dramatic and unprecedented newspaper advertisement earlier this year, hospital leaders accused the province of dragging its feet in approving the project.

The hospital wants to provide the community with a "continuum of care", which would ensure long-term care for seniors and patients with complex needs.

The plan calls for two separate but connected buildings on the hospital campus.

One building would house long-term and complex care facilities, which would be financed through York Region.

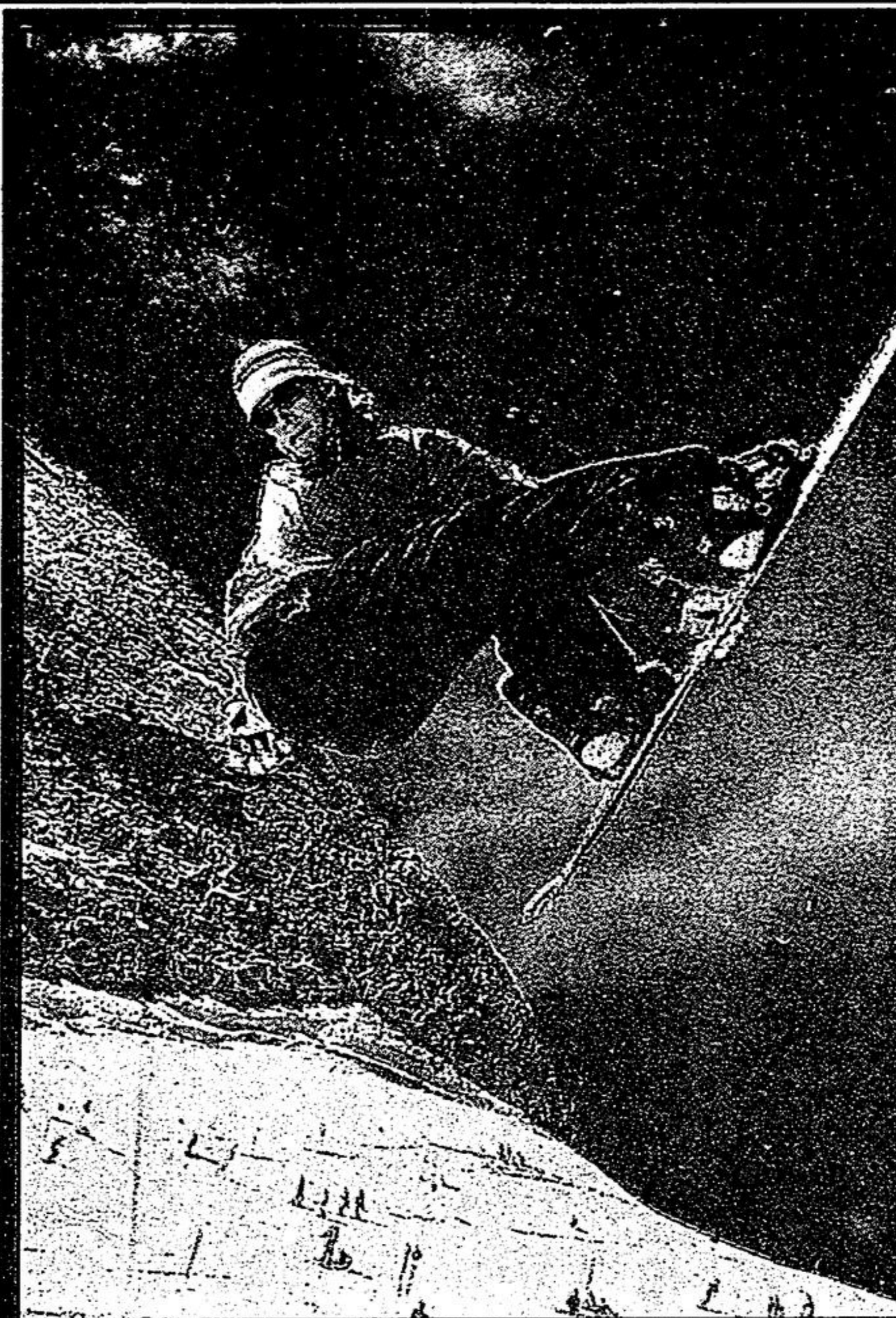
Concentrating long-term care in one facility would free up the hospital for acute care patients.

A new ambulatory care and wellness centre would be home to a freestanding surgical centre, clinics, alternative therapy providers and administration offices. The facility would be funded through a public-private partnership.

The new facilities would allow the expansion of the hospital's diagnostic imaging and emergency departments and create space for a new six-bed cardiac care unit.

Richmond Hill's York Central Hospital, which boasts a new state-of-the-art long-term care facility adjacent to the hospital, also has expansion plans.

According to director of corporate communications, Melina Cormier, the hospital's master plan calls for two phases of redevelopment. Phase one will include an expanded emergency room.



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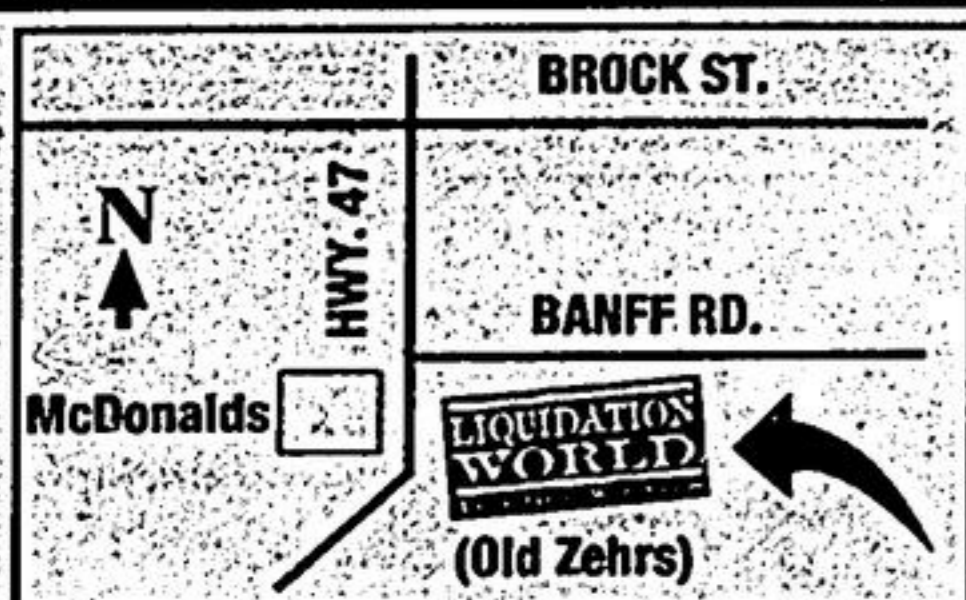
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