

Hospital staff 'stressed out' over SARS

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Thursday's Economist & Sun/Sun-Tribune seeks doctors, nurses, technicians and clerical staff for the clinic, advising it has "immediate openings."

Overwhelmed hospital staff are feeling the pressure, Dr. MacLean said.

"The staff are wonderful and their commitment is unbelievable, but they're starting to get stressed out about our ability to look after the community with the added SARS patients. The weather isn't helping either — we had a huge number of injuries and fractures as a result of the icy conditions Thursday."

The fact Richmond Hill's York Central Hospital has been closed is complicating matters and the ban on volunteers is making life extremely busy for all health-care workers.

Working conditions are also less than ideal, he

added.

"You try having a mask on your face for eight or 12 hours, especially these types of masks. It's not pleasant."

"The next few days are pretty important on whether this thing gets out of control."

While provincial health officials warn of a possible spike in the number of SARS cases reported over the next week as 10-day quarantines wrap up, Dr. MacLean is hoping that doesn't happen.

"The next few days are pretty important on whether this thing gets out of control. If the disease seems not to be increasing, that will be a very positive sign."

'No risks' to Markham Stouffville gala guests

The Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation's annual fundraising gala will go ahead next Saturday, said its president Thursday.

Gina Rosen said she has been monitoring the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome cases in York Region and has had discussions with York Region's public health officers.

"If we thought there would be risks to guests, we wouldn't do it," she said. "There are no restrictions being put on the community, even in large groups. Because the Ministry of Health is not curtailing events in the

community, the foundation made the decision to go ahead."

Ms Rosen pointed out not many frontline health care workers, who represent the majority of SARS cases, attend the gala in any case. Those who do go would either have had no exposure or else they would have already been quarantined.

"We congratulate all the measures undertaken by the hospital and the province. They have been very proactive," she said.

"We understand people are concerned, but we would not put anyone

at risk. We made this decision based on the fact the ministry has said there are no restrictions on large gatherings. It is encouraging people to go about their business and that's what we're doing."

The theme of the gala is "Come Sail Away" and it's at the Hilton Suites on Hwy. 7. The evening features both a silent and a live auction. Black tie is optional.

Tickets are \$250 a person. For more information, call Andrea Guarino at 905-472-7395.

— Kathleen Griffin

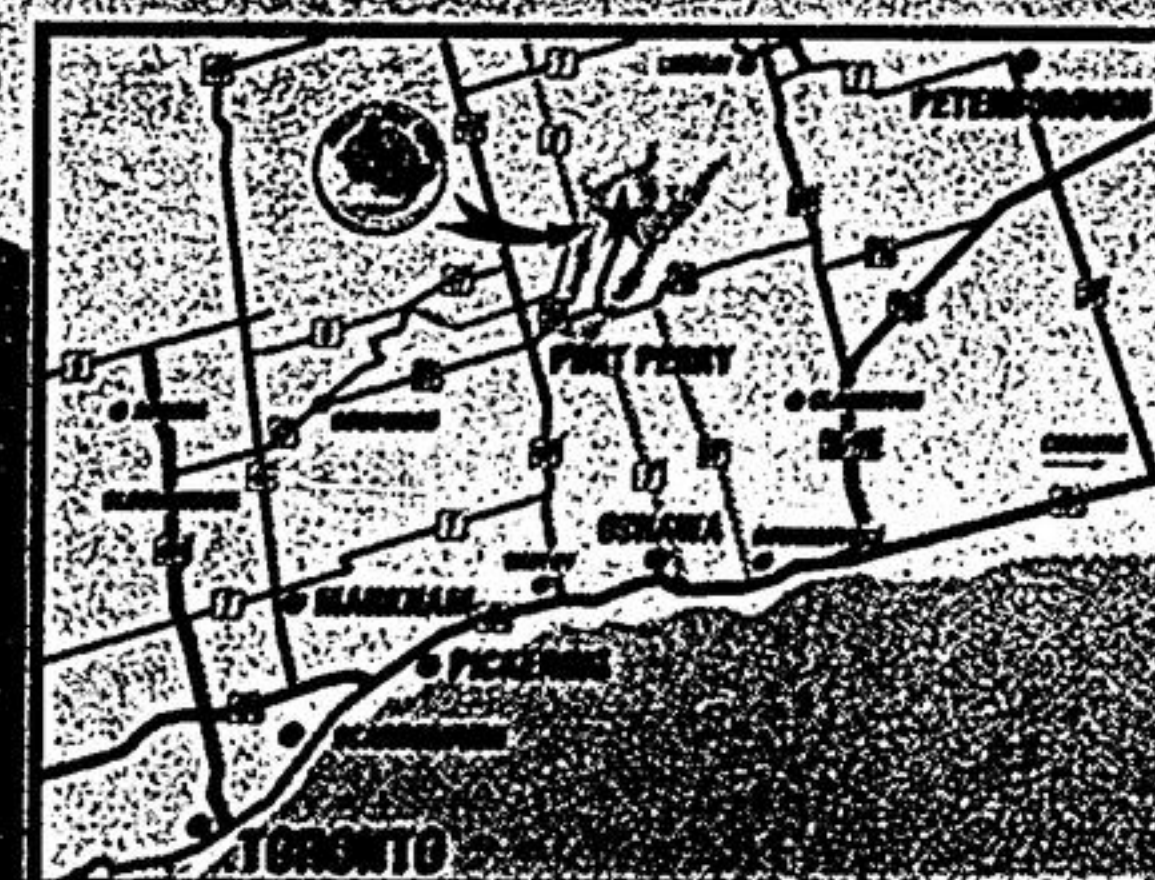


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