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# Hospital relying on line of credit

From page 1

being sent to them over the next couple of weeks.

The Ontario Hospital Association warned this week many hospitals were on the brink of financial ruin because the province stalled its funding.

But Mr. Klees argued York's hospitals aren't in the same situation because the Tories have boosted their budgets by millions of dollars over the past several years.

Still, Markham Stouffville Hospital, Southlake Regional Health Centre and York Central Hospital warn trouble may be just around the corner.

Markham Stouffville, for example, is running a \$5.5 million deficit and is relying on its line of credit to meet payroll and operating expenses.

Vice-president Mary Wilson Trider said while the bank isn't calling in its loans, a prospect of other cash-strapped hospitals in Ontario are facing, she acknowledged the hospital needs a better way to pay its bills.

"It's not a situation we like

to be in. We would prefer not to have to do it. It's part of doing business in hospitals in 2003," she said.

"We have not had a funding announcement for the 2003 fiscal year even though we're almost four full months into it. The (funding) process makes it very difficult to plan."

York Central's acting president, Asmita Gillani, said her hospital has already made \$5.7 million in cuts this year.

The hospital, which has a debt of more than \$10 million, is looking for a 6-to-10 per cent increase in funding from Queen's Park this year to balance its books.

While Ms Gillani said York Central is meeting its operating expenses, she anticipated cash-flow problems by the fall if the Tories fail to forward more funding.

"If the money doesn't come through by November/December, I'm anticipating we'll start to run dry."

Southlake president Dan Carriere said his hospital is facing a \$15-million deficit but is expecting additional funding from the province.

Mr. Carriere, who said

Southlake isn't having trouble meeting its operating expenses, said a construction project has placed the Newmarket hospital in a unique position this year.

It is borrowing money from the bank to bankroll some construction costs.

According to Ms Watson, hospitals in the 905 area code are expected to be saddled with deficits totalling \$90 million this year.

She complained GTA hospitals receive about 56 per cent per capita funding from Queen's Park compared to the Ontario average.

"If \$100 million a year for five years were invested in

GTA hospitals, they would still be 20 per cent behind Ontario's per capita average," she said.

"It's the massive (population) growth in these areas. We're growing more than two or three times of the rest of the province and this is not taken into account when funding is set. We're definitely falling behind."

Ms Watson would not specify the amount GTA hospitals require, but said \$200 million in new funding would still not be enough.

Mr. Klees argued his government is working toward long-term stable hospital funding.

## Seniors project also planned

From page 1

to accommodate both the church and a residential development to go on a 17-acre parcel of land nearby. That development is expected to be a seniors community, made up of 104 cluster-style units. It

will be similar to the Eastern Gate project in southeast Stouffville and could be constructed as soon as the Big Pipe arrives.

Last year, residents in the Cam Fella area attended public meetings to support both the church and the residential project.

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