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Keep York together, access centre urges

Splitting region would complicate health service delivery

BY ROY GREEN
 Staff Writer

York Region's Community Care Access Centre has joined a growing list of health care providers pleading with the province to change the boundaries of its new local health integrated networks here.

The Health Ministry has created 14 networks to co-ordinate the delivery of health services, but the boundaries drawn by the province divide York Region into three separate networks and remove Markham-Stouffville

Hospital from the region's catchment area.

Bill Innes, executive director of the Community Care Access Centre, says splitting the region into three networks would complicate the delivery of health care services.

"We have no idea how many CCACs we would need in this area," Mr. Innes said.

"If the boundaries remain the way they are, it's an absolutely huge geographical area. We deal with two school boards at the moment, but that could increase to 12 under this proposal."

The current boundaries put much of the region in the central local health integrated network, along with parts of Simcoe County and the north

end of Toronto.

But part of Markham, including Markham-Stouffville Hospital, is in the central east network, while part of Vaughan is in central west.

The access centre board will be among those asking the province to keep the region in a single network, Mr. Innes said.

The Markham-Stouffville Hospital board has made a similar request and York Regional chairperson Bill Fisch said he expects regional council will do the same.

"We're working toward the same goal as the hospital and we'll continue to push (the health minister) very hard," Mr. Fisch said.

Fred Tufnell, chairperson of the Simcoe York District Health Council, has been participating in workshops on implementing the new system. He favours the plan, but admits many questions still need to be answered.

"We've been saying for 30 years we need to consolidate health care delivery, so the intent is terrific," Mr. Tufnell said.

"But the issue here is the methodology. I'm not sure it's been worked out in the most practical way and there are questions about the boundaries and what agencies are going to be within the LHIN."

And he believes there is a possibility the boundaries could change to include the whole region in a single network.

"The message I'm hearing is the government is not adverse to tweaking the boundaries a little bit, but is not prepared for wholesale change."

Greek church opens

Markham has a new Greek Orthodox church

The Saints Panteleimon, Anna and Paraskevi, Greek Orthodox Church of Markham, York Region, will officially open with a ceremonial service and dinner tomorrow night.

Church council president John Liagakis and Reverend Father Odiseys Drossos will lead the congregation in a march from the old church to the new church on the same 14-acre property at 11359 Warden Ave., north of Elgin Mills Road.

The church has been in the plan-

ning stage for 15 years.

"It's a dream that has become a reality for all the families involved," Rev. Drossos said.

"It's been in our hearts and minds for a long time."

"It feels wonderful to finally enter our permanent home."

The new 24,000-square-foot church will seat 800 people. It has been constructed in the traditional Byzantine style.

Serving about 3,000 families, it's the only Greek Orthodox church in York Region.

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