



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Rick Sulker (left), chairperson of the York Central Hospital Foundation, shakes hands with Finance Minister Greg Sorbara following the announcement of \$46.4 million for the hospital expansion yesterday.

Work to start in fall

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demand, including 65,000 annual visits to an emergency department designed to handle 25,000.

But this time, the money's really coming, said Ontario Finance Minister Greg Sorbara.

"I sign the cheques," the Vaughan-King-Aurora MPP said. "So far, none of them have bounced."

"We all had the sense that the pressure on the hospital in the centre of York Region had become intolerable," he said. "Its catchment grows daily. We also had a sense of York Central's readiness."

The hospital foundation has raised \$31.4 million toward the \$35-million phase one goal.

To date, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has pledged \$55.5 million, including an earlier \$9.1-million payment.

The initial redevelopment phase will begin after construction tendering is approved by the province. A new inpatient wing and interior renovations to the existing building are the first order.

The program will create a new birthing centre and negative pressure rooms for the isolation of highly infectious patients. Fracture, plastics and ophthalmology clinics will be expanded, as will medical staff facilities, which include a 2,800-square-foot auditorium.

With a total of 512 inpatient beds, the project will allow faster admission, improved access to critical care and birth services and quicker outpatient services following discharge. A half dozen new secured beds will also be available in a new mental health facility.

The enlarged emergency room will

shorten wait times, give speedier access to X-ray and other diagnostic tests and offer greater patient privacy and comfort.

The second phase is expected to cost approximately \$72 million.

York Central's expansion will not deter Vaughan from pursuing a future medical campus, a project currently being studied, Mr. Sorbara said.

"Both are part and parcel of what we need to do for York Region," he said.

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One officer investigating

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rub business hasn't helped, he added. "It's the nature of this business, the people involved don't want to be identified. They don't want other family and friends to know and those attending also want to remain as anonymous as possible," he said.

In November, police released a sketch of a man they believed was at the spa the night of the murders, but have been unable to identify him.

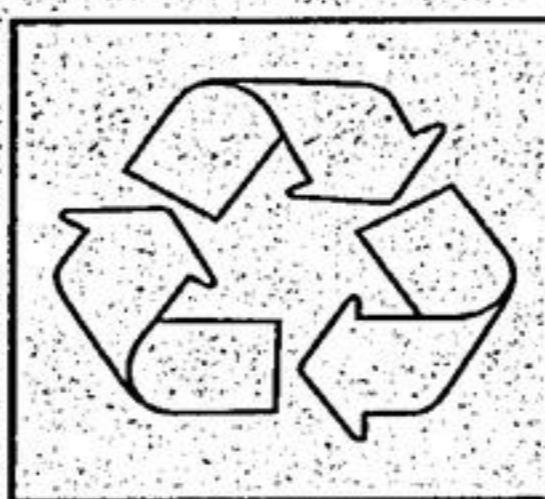
The number of tips received by police remains in the single digits, Det. Martin said.

"None have panned out," he said. "So far it's been all speculation and rumour."

Last February, six investigators were working on the case, but now there is only one, due to limited resources.

"At this point we're just waiting for information to come in," Det. Martin said. "I would not call it a cold case yet, it hasn't reached that point. I'd rather keep it in my hands; our cold case investigator is busy."

Anyone with information should contact the homicide bureau at 1-866-876-5423, ext. 7865, or e-mail at homicide@police.york.on.ca, or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.



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