

Improving emergency response times

When a significant injury or sudden illness occurs, families want to know that Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will be arriving on scene quickly. Halton Region's EMS continues to strive to ensure that medical help can be where it is needed, as quickly as possible.

'EMS response time' is the time it takes from when the dispatcher notifies an EMS crew of the emergency to the time paramedics arrive on site. Standards for response times are set by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Maintaining and improving response time standards can be difficult, especially in the face of a quickly growing population and new housing in previously undeveloped areas.

To ensure that Halton's EMS continues to meet and/or exceed the standards for response times, Halton Region strategically deploys EMS resources to maximize coverage and minimize response times. The number and locations of EMS stations are important components of this strategy.



HEALTH NOTES

When Halton Region assumed responsibility for EMS in 2000, there were six EMS stations throughout the Region. Today there are 11. Here are some recent changes:

- The newest EMS station was opened on May 24, 2007 in northwest Burlington on Brant Street, just south of Upper Middle Road.

The facility will provide a base for one paramedic crew operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, delivering improved service for area residents.

- In 2005, another new EMS station opened on Corporate Drive in southeast Burlington. This station is unique as it is integrated into the Creekway Village Long-term Care Home.

- Halton Hills saw a new Acton Station open in 2004.

It is located just off of Highway #7 on the east side of town in the heart of much of Acton's new housing development.

To better serve Halton Hills residents, Halton Region's next anticipated project is to relocate the Georgetown Station to a more central location.

- In 2003, the Milton station was relocated to downtown Milton.

Also, residents of rural Milton and north Burlington have benefited from the new Campbellville station that was opened in 2003.

- In northeast Oakville, the Georgian Drive station was opened in 2004 and is located adjacent to the Post Inn Village Long-term Care Home.

This station will also service future residents in the rapidly growing Dundas Street corridor.

Prior to 2000, ambulance response times in Halton failed to meet the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care response

time standard of responding to life threatening calls, which is defined as Paramedics arriving on scene within 10 minutes and 32 seconds of being notified by the dispatcher.

Since 2001, as a result of service enhancements, Halton Region has been able to maintain response times in accordance with the legislated standard.

In its last report, the Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative

indicated that only four Ontario municipalities—of which Halton is one—met the response time standards.

For more information on Emergency Medical Services in Halton, call Halton Region at 905-825-6000, toll free 1-866-4-HALTON (1-866-442-5866), TTY 905-827-9833, or visit www.halton.ca.

— *Health Notes is prepared by staff of the Halton Region Health Department.*

Easter Seal Regatta sails July 7

The third annual Oakville Regatta for Easter Seals will be presented by TD Canada Trust and hosted by the Oakville Club, Oakville Yacht Squadron, Oakville Power Boat Club and Bronte Harbour Yacht Club Saturday, July 7.

Today 145 children, youths and young adults in Halton live with a physical disability, and they're striving for independence, acceptance and achievement.

This year The Easter Seal Society, Ontario celebrates its 85th year assisting these children and youth by helping them purchase costly equipment needed for mobility and communication, and by pro-

viding access to critical information, research and specialized camp and recreation experiences including its 'Recreational Choices' funding program.

The Easter Seal Society, Ontario is dedicated to helping kids with physical disabilities succeed and all money raised locally stays in the area to support our local Easter Seals kids.

This year's regatta has something for everyone.

There will be a sailboat race for all area boaters and you don't have to be a member of a club to race.

Easter Seals kids and their families get a chance to watch the race from the water, as

passengers on power boats courtesy of the Oakville Power Boat Club and more than 40 families have registered to date.

There will also be a silent auction featuring prizes for boating enthusiasts and land-lovers alike.

Jimbo will be coming to entertain the kids with his magic show and puppet show.

There will also be a post-race celebration for the skippers, crew, Easter Seals families and volunteers.

All boaters receive a participation burgee, and the winners will claim their prize burgees at the post-race celebration.

If you received a blood transfusion or blood product before 1992, you may have been infected with hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus that slowly damages your liver. Symptoms do not show up for years but you will eventually get sick. Before 1992, screening for this disease was not consistent and many patients became infected through the blood system. So ask your doctor about getting tested. Detection is key to controlling the virus and you may be entitled to financial assistance.

1-877-222-4977

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