

Residents question single-patient rooms

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A higher percentage of single-patient rooms, increased privacy and comfort, enhanced clinical support systems and a new cancer therapy program were also mentioned as some of the new hospital's features.

For many residents, how-

ever, these features did little to justify the mammoth cost. "My concern is what I see as this funding model being forced down the throats of the citizens of Oakville. You are being put in a position here, where you are being told, 'You either come up with \$200 million or you

don't get a new hospital and you have to live with the old hospital," said David Trembley, a former resident.

East end resident Jack Lewis asked why Burlington, Milton and Georgetown were not being asked to contribute since their residents would likely be using the hospital.

Oliver said the Region is contributing in other means such as building the roads on the property.

He also said currently 80 per cent of the people who come to OTMH are from Oakville with that total not expected to change when the new hospital is built at Third Line and Dundas Street.

Green added Region had been asked to contribute, but had voted not to.

Ken Robertson voiced concerns about the number of private beds. He said having to pay for a private bed made the new hospital a private/public hospital and not strictly a

public hospital.

Oliver said nothing would be happening in the new hospital not already taking place at OTMH.

"At OTMH we are charging people with insurance or who have the capacity and interest in paying for private accommodation and semi-private accommodation. This is happening today and it's happening at every single hospital across the province," said Oliver.

"(At the new hospital) There will be 36 beds in a bed cluster and in that cluster there is one four-bed room, three semi-private (two bed) rooms, the

rest are single patient rooms. This contrasts with the current OTMH where we only have less than 20 per cent single-patient rooms. The difference here is that if you don't have insurance you are far more likely to end up in a single patient room than you would ever be today."

Oliver said having 80 per cent of the rooms on the medical and surgical floors as single-patient rooms is the new planning standard for Ontario.

He also said this large number of single patient rooms is being implemented to control the spread of infectious diseases.

"If you don't have insurance and don't have the means to pay and don't want to pay, then you will be placed in a ward bed, one of the four bed rooms. Once they are filled, the next person in goes into a single patient room at no charge."

Andrew Morrison, of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Communications Branch, said the implementation of 80 per cent single-patient rooms in new hospitals is not a blanket policy.

"There are a number of factors to consider. Staffing is a pretty important one, clinical outcome, so if it is going to make a better result of the person's treatment, and obviously operating and capital costs to see if it's feasible to have single rooms," said Morrison in a telephone interview.

"I got treatment at Toronto General about six years ago and they had two wings. They had one wing that was like a month old and one wing that was built in the 40's or 50's," said Garry Gullison, who works in Oakville.

"You don't want to be treated in the old part of the building. The new building with the private rooms and semi-private rooms was excellent. Most people here are scared. Their employers have cut back on their benefits and people are on fixed incomes, but you don't want to be treated in an old hospital."

This public meeting is only one method the Town has used to gain input on the hospital question with a survey mailed to every Oakville household and business.

A telephone survey is also being conducted.

Halton Healthcare Services has agreed to give the existing OTMH lands to the Town in exchange for the \$200 million commitment.

Staff will report on the public consultation campaign to council on Monday, March 1, at which point a decision will be made as to whether the Town will support the hospital.

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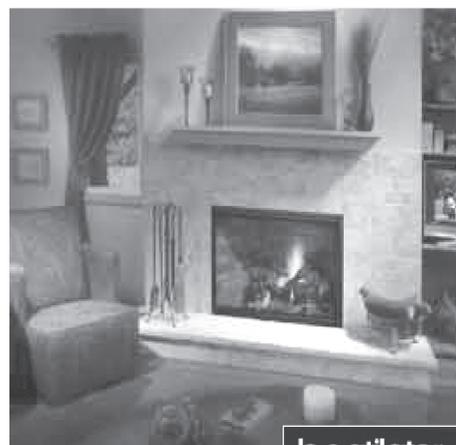
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