

# Caledon Citizen

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## Covering all of Caledon

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## Unfair funding for health care in this region evident

The decision of Headwaters Health Care Centre to join the GTA/905 Healthcare Alliance can be seen as potent proof that the Ontario government has been unfair, or at least unrealistic, in some of its grant formulas.

The Alliance is the collective voice of acute-care and mental health hospitals across the high-growth communities of the GTA that find themselves on the short end of the stick when it comes to getting assistance from Queen's Park.

The objective is to improve local access to medical services and develop clinical services appropriate for the local hospital and the Dufferin-Caledon community. "To achieve this," president and CEO Bob Baynham said, "we need the Government of Ontario to not only provide adequate hospital growth funding but also allocate provincial health care funds to the new Local Health Integration Networks on the basis of population size, growth and characteristics."

Currently, Ontario's hospitals are not funded on the basis of population size and the needs of the local residents. As a result, there are significant and growing gaps in per capita funding for hospital services in high growth regions like Dufferin-Caledon.

The per capita funding for hospital care in the Central West LHIN is \$280 lower than the provincial average. This means residents may have to wait longer for hospital care or bypass their local hospitals and seek care outside their communities.

Caledon and Dufferin have been experiencing population growth rates that are among the highest in the province. Population growth within the Central West LHIN (which includes part of Toronto) is also one of the highest. Peel was the second, and Dufferin the sixth-fastest-growing community in Ontario between 1996 and 2003. Caledon's growth in the same period is projected to be even faster, rising about 22 per cent from 52,889 in 2005 to 59,199 in 2011 and 64,651 in 2016.

A key finding in the document, *It's About You and Your Health: Integrated Health Services Plan for the Central West Local Health Integration Network*, is that there has

been an increasing demand for services. Young families are moving into the area and the rest of us are aging. As a result, local health-care providers need access to more health-care money to deal with population growth to ensure that the community has access to the care they need close to home as the population continues to grow.

The local LHIN's hospitals received per-capita spending of \$385.39, compared with a high of \$2,561, while its mental health facilities got just \$22.92, compared with top funding of \$134.86. Similarly, the local per-capita spending on community support services, at \$4.15, was lowest of the 14 LHINs, where the top recipient got \$59.55. In the area of long-term care, the local LHIN placed 13th, getting \$152.61 in a range of \$134.42 to \$373.90, while its Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) placed 11th at \$110.83, in a range of \$52.87 to \$216.03.

As well, the Central West LHIN has:

- The fewest number of health transfer payment agencies among the province's 14 LHINs;
- The lowest supply per 100,000 population of specialists physicians and nurses in the province and the second lowest supply of family physicians;
- Three under-served communities - Orangeville, Shelburne and Caledon - in terms of family physicians;
- A population of seniors (65 years of age and over) that's expected to grow 54.3% by 2016 — the highest among the 14 LHINs and almost 20 percentage points above the provincial average of 34.6%.

Clearly, this lack of provincial funding is leading to this area being under-served, with local residents having to pay an unfair share of overall health-care costs.

A similar situation exists in the areas of education and transportation, with both local school boards complaining that they simply cannot produce balanced budgets without reducing services or dipping into their reserves.

Any way you look at it, this part of the province is getting short-changed.



## Our Readers Write

Your Jan. 24 editorial "Team effort needed to create an identity for downtown Bolton" was very timely in view of Bolton's Business Improvement Area's (BIA) inability to attract more than 20 per cent of its

### 'Day of Mourning'

The following letter, to Mayor Marolyn Morrison, was submitted to the Citizen.

Thanks to your responsive leadership, the Town of Caledon in 2005 and 2006 joined with many other municipalities and civic-minded organizations in proclaiming April 28 as a Day of Mourning, in remembrance of the many workers and managers who have suffered work-related occupational illnesses, diseases, injuries and deaths.

A CTV News report of Dec. 12 put the number of work-related deaths in 2005 in Canada at roughly 1,100. Often such statistics do not include worker deaths due to occupational diseases, many of which develop over a long period of time from work-related conditions. Many such work-related deaths go unreported.

As a member of the Bolton community for more than 31 years, I would again request the Town of Caledon mark this day as we have in the past by lowering flags to half-staff at all Town facilities and by publishing a news release to encourage the members of the Caledon community to reflect on the importance of safe workplaces.

I'm aware the Town has developed a proactive policy on workplace health and safety, something that is to be commended. I'm also aware that last year in Caledon East, you marked this important day by addressing Town employees on the importance of workplace health and safety and their needs to be vigilant in work-related activities. Thanks again for your past leadership on this matter

Joe Grogan

membership to a key meeting recently.

You suggest that part of what is needed is "an effort on every resident's part." Right on! I could not agree more! In fact, a collaboration of resident groups called the Bolton Community Action Committee has made some modest progress in downtown improvements, most recently with the walkway underpass under Highway #50 and parkette development on the Humber River in downtown Bolton. And the BIA has been part of that collaboration which convinced the Town, Peel Region and the conservation authority that funding was a great idea for these improvements.

Now it is time for us residents to take our involvement one step further. We local residents who patronize downtown Bolton business could begin to ask the operators and owners of those business establishments what part they are playing in boosting the attraction of downtown Bolton.

For sure, as you say, "teamwork, co-operation and a general concern for our neighbours is all it takes to make progress."

Bill Wilson,  
Chair, Bolton

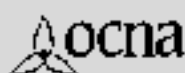
Community Action Committee

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# Caledon Citizen



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