

What's Happening to Our Local Hospitals in Durham & Scarborough?

Briefing Note

Two giant hospital mergers are planned for the hospitals in Scarborough, Ajax, Oshawa, Port Perry and Bowmanville.

Under this plan, if it goes through, the Rouge Valley Health System will be split. Centenary will be merged into a new public hospital corporation in Scarborough with the Scarborough Hospitals' two sites. Ajax-Pickering hospital will be taken over by Lakeridge Health.

Why Are Health Care Advocates Concerned?

1. Extremely high costs for the proposed mergers.

The projected costs of the mergers are enormous and there are few projected savings. This means that tens of millions of dollars to pay for the costs of mergers will have to come out of operational budgets for the hospitals.

According to the documents filed with the government by the hospitals themselves, the costs of the mergers are as follows:

Lakeridge/Ajax-Pickering merger cost: \$18.2 million
Scarborough/Centenary merger cost: \$29.6 million
Total cost to date: \$47.8 million

2. Almost no potential "savings" identified.

Ontario's public hospitals have seen real-dollar budget cuts for years. Services have already been centralized to fewer hospital sites and patients have to drive further for care. Services have been rationalized between hospital sites, and tens of thousands of hospital beds have been closed. Today, Ontario has the fewest hospital beds per person left of any province in Canada and the fewest nurses per patient (RN and RPN).

So it is not a big surprise that the hospitals' own documents filed with the government show that there are almost no savings to be found by merging.

Lakeridge – Ajax Pickering hospital Merger cost \$18.2 million. Projected savings \$300 thousand per year. **It will take more than 62 years to pay off the cost of this merger.**

Scarborough- Centenary hospitals Cost \$29.6 million. Projected savings \$1 - \$1.8 million per year. **It will take 15 – 30 years to pay off the cost of this merger.**

3. No one has any plan to pay the \$47.8 million (and rising) cost. Major service cuts are threatened.

A few years ago, the Scarborough Hospital was forced to cut \$17 million due to funding shortfall from the Ontario government. That cut amounted to a loss of more than 200 full-time nurses, health professionals and patient support staff; closures of outpatient clinics; and cuts to operating rooms, beds and departments in virtually every department of the hospital. Imagine what a cut of \$50 million to the operational budgets of our local hospitals would mean.



4. There is no quality of care or access to care improvement proposed as a result of the merger. Population health planning has not been done.

To date, there has been no planning for the communities' needs for care. The merger proposals are not based on any needs assessment of the communities affected. There is no promise to improve quality or access to care as a result of the mergers.

5. The community of Ajax-Pickering will lose their voice over decisions affecting their community's hospital.

Under the proposal, the Rouge Valley Health System will be split. Centenary will be merged into a new hospital corporation in Scarborough. Ajax-Pickering hospital will be taken over by Lakeridge. They will be one site of a hospital corporation that already has three other sites. The community of Ajax-Pickering will lose their voice.

Where Is the Merger Proposal At?

After health care advocates raised concerns that people in the affected communities have not been made aware of what is going on and have not been consulted, the Minister of Health Announced on Friday October 14 that people will have until November 14 to make submissions to the government about the proposals. Your submission can be informal – a personal letter is just fine – or they can be more formal submissions from groups and organizations.

Please send them by November 14 to:
communityfeedback@ontario.ca or write to:
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
1075 Bay Street, Suite # 1001
Toronto ON M5S 2B1
416-327-4300

After the consultation period, the Minister of Health will make a decision about the merger plans. He has set a target date of December 1 (though that might change).

What Can We Do About It?

- ✓ Join the Durham Health Coalition and help raise awareness in the community by passing out fact sheets, helping to organize public events, and sharing information via social media. Contact Trish at (905) 706-5806.
- ✓ Write to the Minister of Health – Eric Hoskins and tell him what you think: ehoskins.mpp@liberal.ola.org
- ✓ You can also send your concerns to the Premier through her website at: <https://correspondence.premier.gov.on.ca/EN/feedback/default.aspx>

Join the rallies to bring our concerns to the government:

Saturday, November 5 12 o'clock noon

In Ajax – at the Ajax Pickering Hospital. The rally is targeted to bring a message of the public's concerns to Member of Provincial Parliament Joe Dickson.

In Bowmanville – at Member of Provincial Parliament Granville Anderson's office 23 King St. W.

Oshawa & Port Perry residents – please join the rally closest to you. We are trying to bring a message from all residents in the region to the Liberal government MPPs in our region to raise the questions and concerns outlined here.

Durham Health Coalition: 905-706-5806