



The Town of Niagara-On-The-Lake

MEDIA RELEASE

COMMITTEE CALLS ON NHS TO KEEP ESSENTIAL SERVICES IN NOTL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2012

Niagara-on-the-Lake— A local health-care committee struck to review Niagara Health System (NHS) Supervisor Kevin Smith's report is recommending that NHS ensure services such as convalescent and palliative care, nurse practitioners, and outpatient services remain in one location in the community. In addition, the committee is recommending NHS transfer the existing hospital to the Town in order for them to facilitate future development options for the site.

According to Lord Mayor Dave Eke "The Committee felt very strongly that these services should remain in one location for the time being," he stated. "We are also suggesting that if bed numbers need to be reduced, let's use hospice beds solely for residents who require convalescent and palliative care services. Once openings are available at a long-term care facility, we'll look at those options. But in the meantime, given our high senior population and limited transit services, these patients need to be close to their loved ones."

Some of the Committee's other recommendations include:

- Maintaining a strong nurse practitioner presence for residents and visitors;
- Keeping laboratory, x-ray, ultrasound, chiropody and audiology outpatient services available until a private operator is secured;
- Forging primary care and teaching partnerships with Community Care Access Centre, McMaster University Medical School, and Brock University and using freed up space from closed inpatient beds for teaching purposes.

A copy of the Committee's letter with full recommendations is attached.

For further information, please contact
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905-468-3266



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The Town of Niagara-On-The-Lake

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June 15, 2012

Dr. Kevin P.D. Smith
NHS Supervisor
c/o St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton
Room M146
50 Charlton Ave. E.
Hamilton, ON L8N 4A6

Dear Dr. Smith:

Re: Interim Report on the Restructuring of the Niagara Health System

A Review Committee has been established to provide a response to your Interim Report on the Restructuring of the Niagara Health System.

The Review Committee is comprised of the following:

- Mr. Dave Eke, Lord Mayor, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
- Mr. Mike Galloway, CAO, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
- Ms. Maria Bau-Coote, Executive Director, NOTL Family Health Team
- Dr. Karen Berti, Local Physician
- Dr. David Reimer, Local Physician
- Mr. Benny Marotta, President, Solmar Development Corp.
- Mr. Rainer Hummel, President, Hummel Properties

1. Convalescent and Palliative Care Beds

The Review Committee believes it is essential that sufficient convalescent and palliative care beds continue to be provided in some form within Niagara-on-the-Lake to serve the community. The Committee believes the number of beds could be reduced to 8-10 convalescent beds and 3-4 palliative beds if the beds were used solely for Niagara-on-the-Lake residents.

A local retirement home complex presently has a proposal submitted to the LHIN for a demonstration model of 8-10 "Assess and Restore" beds in their supportive housing complex. This would be one model which could provide convalescent beds within the community, if approved by the LHIN. These could be available quickly and would cost significantly less than hospital beds.

Palliative care beds could possibly be provided through one of the local nursing homes if an appropriate designation of the beds was made at the LHIN level. (For your information, there is a local nursing home applying for the 96 beds re-released in Welland, which would be very open to providing these in their proposed new home. Other homes are also interested in this possibility with their existing beds.)

According to the 2011 Census data from Statistics Canada, 26 percent of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents are 65 years and older. As well, Niagara-on-the-Lake has grown by 5.6 percent, and is one of only two municipalities in the Niagara region that have increased in population since 2006. Having the appropriate number of convalescent and palliative care beds within the community, where patients are in close proximity to their physician and family, would best ensure their quality and continuity of care. Additionally, a lack of inter-regional transportation that is accessible and easy to understand for our elderly population would make it difficult for them to get to another facility, thus supporting the need for convalescent beds in our community.

2. Nurse Practitioner

The Review Committee agrees with your recommendation that refers to the necessity of a nurse practitioner in Niagara-on-the-Lake. In addition to caring for local residents, the nurse practitioner also sees visitors. In fact, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake hosts millions of visitors each year, many of whom are from Ontario and have provincial health care.

3. Outpatient Services

Furthermore, the Review Committee believes it is important to maintain the existing outpatient services within Niagara-on-the-Lake, such as laboratory, x-ray, ultrasound, chiropody, and audiology. We request that the NHS maintain those services presently provided by the NHS unless/until a private operator is found to provide the same service. (This has already been done with lab.) Should the services stay in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Committee believes there would be community support for upgrading equipment where needed.

4. Niagara-on-the-Lake Hospital Site Building

The Review Committee would like to suggest that the NHS transfer the ownership of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Hospital Site and provide one-time funding in order for the above-mentioned services to continue in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The Committee feels it is important to keep all services in one location and wishes to see the building used for that purpose. Furthermore, hospice beds in the existing building could be utilized as a temporary solution for providing palliative care to residents until palliative care beds are made available in the long-term care facility.

One option for the existing facility is to transfer the building to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake in Trust in order for future possibilities to be considered.

Dr. Kevin P.D. Smith, NHS Supervisor
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5. Additional Possibilities

Lastly, the Review Committee sees a benefit in pursuing affiliations with the Community Care Access Centre, McMaster University Medical School, and Brock University for greater primary care and teaching and educational opportunities. The space vacated by the inpatient beds in the present building could be renovated to be used for this purpose.

On behalf of the Review Committee, we respectfully request that you consider our proposal. We would appreciate discussing the specifics of these plans with you and Ministry of Health representatives to determine more concrete plans to implement these ideas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Eke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dave" being more prominent than the last name "Eke".

Dave Eke
Lord Mayor