

Press Release

Friends of the Ajax/Pickering Hospital – Press Release, September 28, 2016:

The population of West Durham is JUST TOO BIG to be properly served by a healthcare junior-partner.

West Durham deserves equal say in Healthcare Decisions.

Pickering, Ajax and Whitby Ontario – Right now, a determined protest against the hostile take-over of our community hospital is well underway in West Durham by the Friends of the Ajax/Pickering Hospital.

What was recommended by the experts as a new Durham Hospital Corporation has instead become a hostile takeover of the Ajax/Pickering Hospital by Lakeridge Health. A bid that places Lakeridge's existing plans above the needs of West Durham and relegates Ajax/Pickering Hospital to junior-partner status – again.

As a junior-partner in the Rouge Valley Health System, West Durham citizens suffered decades of underservice such that now the Ajax/Pickering Hospital has only sufficient capacity to serve 1/3 of the current residents, its new Emergency Department is already overflowing due to bed shortages and, most critically, it has a capacity to admit only 50% of the patients who require admission. All this despite being the fastest growing community in the GTA.

Additionally, while a mere junior-partner in the Rouge Valley System, serious efforts were undertaken to remove services from West Durham including mental health care and obstetrics. These takeovers had to be fought vigorously through community protests by local residents and organizations. Protests in which only the fight to keep obstetrics was ultimately successful.

The present level of underservice is due to the lack of adequate representation for the people of West Durham in making local healthcare decisions and was one reason for dismantling the Rouge Valley System in favour of what was supposed to be a more balanced approach.

The demands being made to achieve fairness for West Durham are certainly not onerous and follow the recommendations of the Ministry's own experts:

1. A new Durham Health Corporation that will represent ALL hospitals in the area
2. A new board of directors with fair representation from all communities
3. A new hospital to accommodate the population growth in West Durham
4. A new system that will ensure EVERY resident has the hospital services they deserve

Join us at our first rally on October 6th at 7:00PM at the Ajax Community Centre and please visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/friendsofAjaxPickeringHospital and website at www.friendsofAPH.ca for more details and to make your opinions known.

Letter to the editor:

Healthcare in West Durham is under siege.

Healthcare in Ontario has become a highly politicized subject. And in any political forum, deals may be struck, expedience observed and allies rewarded while the greater good, expert advice and common sense can go unheeded.

For many years now, healthcare services in West Durham have languished as we were relegated to secondary importance within the Rouge Valley Health System.

Now, our healthcare is threatened with many more years of marginalization as Ajax/Pickering Hospital is about to be swallowed up in a hostile takeover by Lakeridge Health.

Despite an open, straightforward, professional process that recommended equal status for West Durham, Lakeridge Health and the Ministry of Health have instead chosen their own reasons to ignore expert advice, evade fairness and diminish the welfare of those living in West Durham.

I am told that this is a fait accompli; that by protesting I am simply butting my head against a wall.

Maybe, but if I won't take a stand for the well-being of my family, my friends and my loved ones, who should I take a stand for?

I am attending the rally in support of adequate local healthcare on October 6th at the Ajax Community Centre at 7:00PM.

Please join me.

Email to Premier Wynne

Premier Wynne,

You should stop the hostile take-over of Ajax/Pickering Hospital by Lakeridge Health System.

Doing the right thing is such a simple fix to this long-term, costly mistake.

Why are the people of West Durham Region being abandoned by the Liberal Party of Ontario and treated as second class citizens? You are turning your back on almost half the population of this area.

Despite agreeing with the open, straightforward, professional process that recommended equal healthcare status for the people of West Durham, the Liberal Minister of Health has now changed his stance and has chosen to ignore expert advice, evade fairness and diminish the welfare of those living in West Durham.

And how could the same process that serves the greater good, adheres to expert advice and follows common sense be correct for Scarborough yet be overridden specifically for Durham?

Who exactly benefits from this decision? Not the people of West Durham.

This is a mistake that will be felt more intensely as time goes by, as families and loved ones are hurt by this decision and as the population of West Durham overtakes our neighbouring communities in numbers and overwhelms the available healthcare system.

All we are asking for is a return to a fair process, just as your experts recommended.

For everyone's sake, stop the hostile take-over of Ajax/Pickering Hospital by Lakeridge Health System.