



Battle of Fort George | Page 11

CODE GREY

"Code Grey" is one in a series of stories in The Lake Report about health care in Niagara Region. In hospital parlance, "Code Grey" means loss of essential service.

Nurse practitioner, more home care 'essential' for NOTL

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

It is no secret many residents are unhappy with the level of health care available in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

From doctor shortages to limited home care, NOTLers want – and expect – better.

Many residents don't have a family doctor – or a walk-in option.

The nearest full-service hospital is about 30 minutes

away in St. Catharines and there's no emergency or urgent care option.

Niagara Health broke ground on the new south Niagara hospital this week but it is still years and several kilometres away.

There's the modern, new Village Medical Centre in NOTL, but it is largely a fresh location for services that already existed in town.

So, looking to the future, Coun. Sandra O'Connor, who is leading

the town's quest to improve health care, says a walk-in clinic should soon be available for those without a family doctor.

That cohort is a sizable one, given the town's growth, tourism and the

population of seasonal workers.

"We are very, very close to getting our nurse practitioner position and establishing a walk-in clinic for the people

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Three-storey apartment proposed for Old Town

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Residents on King Street may be getting some new neighbours, but many believed they'd be getting quite a few less.

Homeowners have a few concerns about a new three-storey apartment Butler's Development Garden Inc. is proposing to build on the edge of Old Town, at the southwest end of King Street.

Several took to the Facebook page NOTL 4U to share their views on July 15.

Meritage Lane resident Patrick Gedge said he was "shocked" when he first learned of the proposal last week.

"It was the developer who told us directly, in person, that it would be

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Summer fun in NOTL parks



Kids made buttons and potted seeds at the NOTL library pop-up at Centennial Park on Monday. **Story on Page 6.** MADDY GORDON

Police urge driver in NOTL hit-and-run to surrender

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Niagara Regional Police are urging the motorist who left the scene after striking an 84-year-old Niagara-on-the-Lake cyclist to turn

themselves in.

After releasing photos of the type of vehicle suspected to have hit Nester Chemerika last Thursday evening as he biked along East and West Line, "We have received some tips

from the community that detectives are following up on," Const. Phil Gavin told The Lake Report Wednesday.

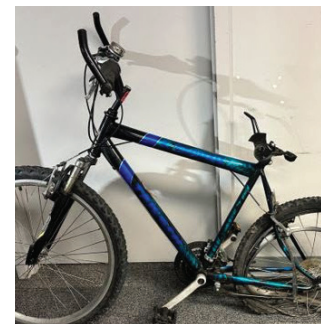
"This wasn't an event that the person who was driving could say they did not know

they struck someone," he added.

"This investigation is not going away, a person was critically injured. We strongly encourage the person responsible to contact legal counsel and arrange

for a safe and peaceful surrender."

Police noted the driver didn't offer aid to Chemerika, who was found in the north side ditch, with his



Continued on Page 4 Nester Chemerika's bike.



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Residents want better home care for NOTL

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who do not have a doctor in NOTL or who have doctors elsewhere and want one here,” O’Connor said in an interview.

NOTL’s population is about 18,000 and “there are 6,000 people who are not rostered with the Niagara North Family Health Team here. That’s a lot of people.”

O’Connor has been working on the issue for months, first raising it in May 2022. Her goal is to have it approved by this fall – or sooner.

“We are just working on the transition plan at the moment.”

She also wants to put more resources into palliative care.

“Following very closely behind is to advocate now for an urgent care centre for when Glendale comes online, almost doubling the population of Niagara-on-the-Lake,” O’Connor added.

Development of the Glendale area will bring thousands of new people to NOTL’s southern perimeter.

Virgil residents Leslie and Bud Moulson have a lot of qualms about the state of health care in NOTL.

While the staff who deliver the care are doing a first-rate job, they say the system itself is riddled with problems.

They shared a recent letter to Niagara Health highlighting concerns about Bud’s stay at the Niagara General Hospital with a broken leg earlier this year.

In their letter, the Moulsons reiterated the feeling of being taken advantage of as “vulnerable people” in the hospital system through excess charges and lack of resources.

In part, the letter says,



Bud and Leslie Moulson are fed up with the health care system in Niagara and want to see more home care. JULIA SACCO

“A hospital stay is a dismal experience. Imagine it without TV, phone and internet access.”

Issues ranging from high-priced web access and television fees to terrible food are sore points that the Moulsons insist could be remedied with one main change: increased home care services.

“Nobody talks about home care,” said Leslie Moulson.

“We talk about increasing the number of long-term care beds. (Premier Doug) Ford is talking about building more long-term care. Well, not all of us want or necessarily need long-term care.”

Moulson’s letter initially received no response from Niagara Health. Only The Lake Report and the office of MPP Wayne Gates got back to her.

After a second attempt, Moulson said the hospital’s patient relations department responded but offered little help.

“It was basically, ‘Thanks for writing,’” Moulson said.

“They said in regard to the cost of the patient transfer, ‘We have no control over that.’ They

said with regard to the horrendous cost of television and internet, ‘We have no control over that.’”

The hospital’s response adds that “I will ensure that feedback, as well as the concerns regarding cost, is shared.”

“Nobody talks about home care. We talk about increasing the number of long-term care beds.”

LESLIE MOULSON

According to Statistics Canada, 30.9 per cent of NOTL’s population in 2021 was over the age of 65, compared to about 17 per cent provincewide.

In an older community like Niagara-on-the-Lake, Moulson thinks that giving people the option to “age in place” rather than in a medical environment will be beneficial to the population as a whole.

“There are lots of seniors in nursing homes who would be at home if they had home care support,” she said.

Home care would entail practices like an assessment of the residence to remove potential hazards, plus wellness checks to ensure the client is doing well, things that Moulson thinks shouldn’t be a “big deal” to offer.

Moulson detailed her husband’s hospital stay, citing how unpleasant it was to share a room with four other men.

“It’s just not ideal and the hospital is so old and painted that institutional yellow.”

She thinks a comfortable stay at home would benefit many different kinds of patients, like those with dementia awaiting nursing homes, or even Bud, who much preferred awaiting assessment at home over spending two additional weeks in the hospital.

The Moulsons emphasized the care offered by nurses and workers was exceptional, noting the problems they faced were rooted in a flawed system rather than poor service.

“I think it’s important that the people who are providing the care are acknowledged as going above and beyond because they’re stretched to the

limit,” said Leslie Moulson.

O’Connor takes a keen interest in trying to improve health care in Niagara-on-the-Lake and shares the Moulsons’ sentiments.

“I think a lot of people would prefer to stay in their homes as opposed to going into long-term care and if we had a better set up for home care, more reliable and dependable resources, that would be great for many people,” she said.

Niagara New Democrat MPP Wayne Gates is the party’s critic for long-term care and he is keeping a close eye on NOTL health care.

“We’ve had 5,400 deaths in long-term care facilities. I’ve had a lot of people in NOTL talk to us about what happened with their family members,” said Gates.

“How can we fix long-term care? How can we convince the government to invest in long-term care?”

Gates agrees with the Moulsons, saying, “Home care is probably the one thing that could fix the entire system.”

“Most seniors that I have talked to – and I’ve talked to a lot being a long-term care critic – say that they want to stay in their home.

They don’t want to be in the hospital and running back and forth from the emergency room,” he said.

Gates gave credit to the government for promising to invest \$1 billion into home care, though only “about a fifth” has been spent thus far.

He is working with different organizations to determine how best to disperse the money.

Aside from an increase in home care, Gates suggests that demanding an increase in doctors in Niagara is another important step toward improvement.

“Whether it be across the province or across my riding, I think the biggest issue is our hospital system is at full capacity,” said Gates.

“The president of the NHS and I are on the same page about this and we’ve said that we will work together in trying to reach out to doctors,” he said.

“We need more doctors. That’s certainly something that I’m getting lots of comments on from people in Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

Given Niagara’s desirable location, Gates thinks it shouldn’t be too difficult to convince practitioners to find a new home here.

“I think if we get out and fix all the other little things, that doctors need to make sure that they feel supported, then they will come to Niagara because I think everyone wants to live in Niagara.”

Above all, Gates insists universally available public health care – and not more privatization – is essential for the sake of not only Niagara, but the entire province.

“This government has decided to privatize our health care and it should never be about profit. It should always be able to care.”

Vehicle make identified, police searching

Continued from Front Page

bicycle nearby.

On Monday, police said the suspect vehicle is a General Motors brand SUV or pickup truck.

Investigators determined it is a 1994 to 1999 GMC Yukon, Chevrolet Suburban or a GMC Sierra pickup and is either pewter metallic or silver in colour.

They released a series of photos of GM trucks that potentially match the suspect vehicle in the hopes that the public will recog-

nize the truck.

It is missing an external mirror and has damage to the passenger side front corner, investigators said.

Meanwhile, Chemerika remains in a Hamilton hospital in critical condition after undergoing two surgeries for the severe injuries sustained in the crash.

His neighbour Don Lees, who has been in close contact with the family, said Chemerika was doing somewhat better.

“He had two surgeries for his arm and his leg. He has

a broken bone in his face. I guess the muscle on the back of his leg was really ripped open,” he said.

An earlier police statement said the man was hit “by a truck or utility vehicle while cycling and the vehicle then left the scene prior to police arrival.”

The incident happened about 8:30 p.m.

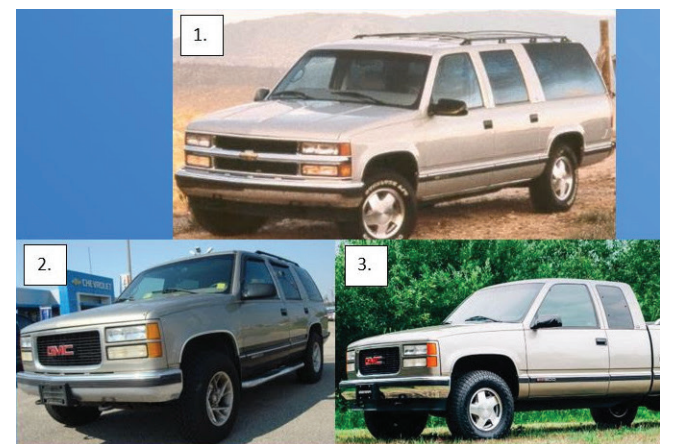
Doctors originally worried he would be paralyzed due to broken vertebrae, which turned out instead to be “wear and tear on his back,” said Lees.

“He’s in rough shape. He’s going to be in the hospital for a while. There’s no doubt about that,” he added.

Doctors estimate he will be in the hospital for about three months and then another three or four months in recovery at home, Lees said.

The motorist fled the scene after striking Chemerika as he rode along East and West Line near Concession 2.

Police are asking anyone with information or dash cam footage to contact them



Police say the suspect vehicle is either a Chevrolet Suburban, top, GMC Yukon or GMC Sierra. It is pewter metallic or silver in colour. NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE

at 905-688-4111, dial option 3, ext. 1009089.

Anonymous tips can be sent to Crime Stoppers

Niagara online or by calling 1-800-222-8477.

- With files from Somer Slobodian.