



April 6, 2023

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
College Park, 777 Bay St., 5 th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Re: The Durham Business Alliance's letter of February 3, 2023 *Support for Advancing Lakeridge Health's Master Plan – Much Needed Investment in Durham Region*

Dear Minister Jones:

The Durham Business Alliance represents the eight chambers of commerce and boards of trade of Durham Region and a combined membership of approximately 2,500 local businesses and organizations.

We are following up on our previous letter today to express our deep disappointment in the recent budget announcement which made no provision for funding a planning grant for a new regional hospital and trauma centre for Lakeridge Health in Durham Region. We believe that the lack of funding for a new hospital is a major oversight in the budget. Durham Region, with its growing population, is in dire need of additional hospitals for the following reasons:

Growing Population

Durham Region has experienced significant population growth in recent years. This growth has put a strain on existing healthcare facilities, and many residents are facing long wait times for medical procedures and services. A new hospital would alleviate this strain and improve access to care for the region's residents.

According to Statistics Canada, the population of Durham Region grew by 6.3% between 2016 and 2021, which is higher than the national average growth rate of 5.3%. Moreover, Durham Region is projected to have a population of over 900,000 by 2041, which represents an increase of almost 30% from its current population.

This population growth has resulted in increased demand for healthcare services in the region. For instance, the Lakeridge Health hospital network, which serves Durham Region and its surrounding areas, reported that it had over 1 million patient visits in 2019, an increase of 3.6% from the previous year. Additionally, in 2020, the hospital network reported that it had to cancel over 8,000 surgeries and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has further exacerbated the strain on the healthcare system.

These figures demonstrate the urgent need for additional healthcare infrastructure in Durham Region, including a new hospital to accommodate the growing population and ensure that residents have access to timely and high-quality healthcare services.

Aging Infrastructure

The current hospital facilities in Durham Region are aging, and many need significant upgrades and renovations. A new hospital would provide state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, allowing healthcare professionals to deliver high-quality care to patients in a modern and safe environment.

1. According to Lakeridge Health, the average age of its facilities is 50 years, which is well above the recommended lifespan of most hospital buildings.
2. In 2018, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) reported that over 40% of hospital infrastructure in Canada was in poor or fair condition, and that the average age of hospital buildings in the country was 43 years.
3. A recent report by the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) highlighted that hospitals across the province are facing a \$24 billion infrastructure backlog, which includes the cost of renovating and upgrading existing facilities to meet modern standards.
4. Despite being the second largest municipality in Ontario, Durham Region still has no trauma centre within our boundaries. This means that that we must frequently continue to engage the services of Ornge to evacuate critically-injured or endangered patients, costing both valuable treatment time and vastly more than local ground ambulance service.

These figures highlight the urgent need for investments in hospital infrastructure, including the construction of new facilities, to ensure that patients receive care in safe and modern environments. A new hospital for Lakeridge Health would not only address the issue of aging infrastructure, but also provide much-needed capacity to serve the growing population of Durham Region. Lakeridge Health is ready to meet these demands.

Economic Growth: A new hospital is crucial for the success of our local businesses and organizations. By providing high quality healthcare services, we can ensure a healthier and more productive workforce, which in turn will drive economic growth and prosperity. Additionally, a new hospital will attract and retain new businesses, investors, and employees, ultimately contributing to the long-term sustainability and success of our community.

Timing: We understand that it could be as much as 10 years before this new hospital is open and the rate of growth across the entire region is too fast to continue to delay this process. It is urgently required to address service gaps.

In addition, we ask that the additional Lakeridge Health capital requests currently on file with the Ministry of Health be funded.

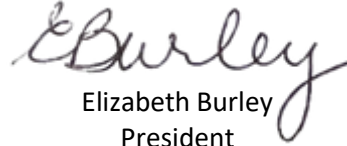
In light of these reasons, we urge the government to recognize Lakeridge Health's recommendation and reconsider its decision and allocate funding for a planning grant for the new hospital in Durham Region, no later than in its 2023 Fall Economic Statement.

We believe that investing in healthcare infrastructure is crucial for the well-being of our community and the prosperity of our businesses and organizations. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Nicole Gibson
Executive Director
Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade



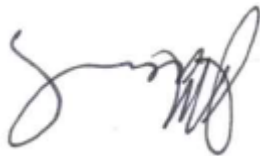
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Andrew Scuse
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CC:

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Shaun Collier, Mayor, Town of Ajax
Adrian Foster, Mayor Municipality of Clarington
Dan Carter, Mayor City of Oshawa
Kevin Ashe, Mayor City of Pickering
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Walter Schummer, Mayor Township of Brock
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