



**October 25, 2023**

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

**Re: Pre-Budget Consultations - Urgent Funding for Lakeridge Health's Proposed New Hospital**

Dear Minister Jones,

As part of the provincial government's pre-budget consultations, the Durham Business Alliance wishes to reiterate the pressing need for planning grant funding for the proposed new hospital and urgent care unit in Durham Region.

This letter follows our two previous communications expressing disappointment and urging action. We believe it is a significant oversight by the provincial government to make no provision for a planning grant to support Lakeridge Health's proposed new facility. The need is great, and we urge you to include funding in the upcoming budget cycle or earlier.

The Durham Business Alliance highlights the following factors as compelling reasons why action is needed now:

1. **Growing Population:** Durham Region has witnessed substantial population growth in recent years, straining existing healthcare facilities and leading to extended wait times for medical services. A new hospital is imperative to alleviate this strain and enhance healthcare access for our residents.

According to Statistics Canada, Durham Region's population grew by 6.3% between 2016 and 2021, surpassing the national average growth rate of 5.3%. Moreover, it is projected that Durham Region's population will exceed 900,000 by 2041, an increase of nearly 30% from the current figure. This remarkable population growth has fueled increased demand for healthcare

services, as exemplified by Lakeridge Health's network, which reported over 1 million patient visits in 2019, marking a 3.6% increase from the previous year. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic compelled the hospital network to cancel over 8,000 surgeries and procedures in 2020, exacerbating the strain on the healthcare system. These statistics underscore the urgent need for additional healthcare infrastructure, including a new hospital.

2. **Aging Infrastructure:** Existing hospital facilities in Durham Region are aging and require extensive upgrades and renovations. A new hospital would offer state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, providing a modern, secure environment for healthcare professionals to deliver high-quality care.

a. According to Lakeridge Health, the average age of its facilities is 50 years, surpassing the recommended lifespan of most hospital buildings. b. In 2018, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) reported that over 40% of hospital infrastructure in Canada was in poor or fair condition, with an average building age of 43 years. c. A recent report from the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) has highlighted a \$24 billion infrastructure backlog across the province, encompassing renovation and modernization costs to meet contemporary standards. d. Despite being the second-largest municipality in Ontario, Durham Region lacks a trauma center within its boundaries, necessitating the use of Ornge services for critically injured patients, incurring valuable treatment time and higher costs.

These figures underscore the immediate requirement for investments in hospital infrastructure, including the construction of new facilities, to ensure patients receive care in modern, secure environments. A new hospital for Lakeridge Health would not only address the aging infrastructure issue but also provide much-needed capacity to cater to Durham Region's growing population.

3. **Economic Impact:** A new hospital is pivotal for the prosperity of our local businesses and organizations. By providing high-quality healthcare services, we can ensure a healthier and more productive workforce, stimulating economic growth and prosperity. Additionally, a new hospital will attract and retain new businesses, investors, and employees, ultimately contributing to our community's long-term sustainability and success.
4. **Timing:** Recognizing that it could be as long as 10 years before this new hospital becomes operational, the rapid rate of growth across the entire region necessitates that we no longer delay this crucial process. We kindly request that the additional Lakeridge Health capital requests currently on file with the Ministry of Health be funded to address service gaps.

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

Representing eight chambers of commerce and boards of trade with a combined membership of approximately 2,500 businesses, the Durham Business Alliance speaks with one voice on this issue. We believe investment in healthcare infrastructure is indispensable for the well-being and prosperity of our community. We acknowledge that many investments have already been made in Bowmanville, Ajax, Clarington, Scugog, and Whitby. Yet there are healthcare needs in Durham Region that remain unmet, along with more to come. Lakeridge Health's proposed hospital meets these critical needs for our growing community.

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

Sincerely,

**Jason King**, Chair, Durham Business Alliance, CEO, Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce

**Preeti Sangwan**, Co-Chair, Durham Business Alliance, GR Lead, Whitby Chamber of Commerce



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CC:

Honourable Doug Ford, Premier

Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance

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Adrian Foster, Mayor Municipality of Clarington

Dan Carter, Mayor City of Oshawa

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Wilma Wotten, Mayor Township of Scugog

Walter Schummer, Mayor Township of Brock

Dave Barton, Mayor Township of Uxbridge

Elizabeth Roy, Mayor Town of Whitby