



October 9, 2020

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Room 281
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier:

I am writing you about the urgent need for a new hospital to serve the people of South Georgian Bay.

The existing Collingwood General and Marine Hospital is old and in dire need of replacement.

Simply put, our region deserves better.

We need a new hospital that meets the standards for safe, high-quality care in the 21st century.

Our current hospital, a 77-bed acute care facility, is extremely busy and has considerable challenges placed on it given its age.

The hospital's emergency department looks after roughly 38,000 patients annually. These people are from Wasaga Beach, Collingwood, Clearview Township, Blue Mountains, and Grey Highlands. These communities are home to more than 60,000 people.

In addition, our emergency staff care for thousands of visitors to the area each year. In fact, one in six patients reside outside South Georgian Bay.

On top of this, around 550 babies are born at General and Marine Hospital each year and we expect this number to grow, especially as more people are moving to our area.

We have needed a new hospital for several years. We do not need a redeveloped site but rather a new building on a new footprint. Anything less is not acceptable.

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the need to move forward with a new building.

Our current site presents challenges in terms of safe physical distancing for staff, patients, and visitors. Attempting to renovate the existing hospital would simply exacerbate the situation.

The current small physical footprint does not allow for appropriate, private, and safe waiting room spaces for patients within the Emergency Department, Ambulatory Care Department, Diagnostic Imaging, Cardiorespiratory Department, Endoscopy, Same Day Surgery, and other Outpatient areas.

The hospital's dialysis unit is at a busy front entrance to the hospital and is a space that does not allow safe physical distancing for patients receiving treatment.

Sixty-five percent of all current inpatient beds are in multi-patient rooms. Patients are in close proximity and occupying limited ventilated spaces due to aged infrastructure and current building design. In many cases, modification is not possible.

Over the years, we have seen significant provincial health care dollars directed to Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre in Barrie. Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket has also received substantial investment. And I know that in recent years the province has directed sizeable funding to hospitals in other parts of Ontario.

South Georgian Bay residents warrant the government's attention now so they can access health care in a safe and contemporary space.

Delaying will only lead to increased costs down the road. And it will only place further strains on the outdated hospital facility we have, as well as the highly skilled people working there.

We need your government to commit to the building of a new hospital for the people of South Georgian Bay. We need the funding earmarked and all of the approvals in place. I look forward to your response.

Thank you for your time and please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,



Nina Bifulchi
Mayor
Town of Wasaga Beach

- c. Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, President of the Treasury Board
Hon. Jim Wilson, MPP, Simcoe-Grey