



The Royal Canadian Legion
Zone E-5
RR #1, Box 3156
Gravenhurst, ON
P1P 1R1

RE: Amalgamation of Muskoka Hospitals.

The Royal Canadian Legion operates a series of 6 Branches in the Muskoka community through our Legion Zone E-5; Gravenhurst, Bracebridge, Huntsville, Bala, MacTier and Port Carling. In those combined Branches the Legion boasts a membership exceeding 1300 members. Under the 'Mission Statement' of Dominion Command of The Royal Canadian Legion, "TO SERVE VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDANTS, PROMOTE REMEMBRANCE AND ACT IN THE SERVICE OF CANADA AND ITS COMMUNITIES," Legion Branches offer a series of services to Veterans and seniors in our respective communities. No one can be sure exactly how many Legion Members are acting on The Legions behalf offering these services but, in each Branch, a "Legion Seniors Chair" co-ordinates and often dispenses these services. In one Branch alone, one single Legion Member made 16 trips transporting Legion Seniors to medical appointments in hospitals in our community in 2017.

That's just one person in one single Legion Branch. There is no way to calculate how many other members in that one Branch, or how many in each of the other 5 Branches in our Zone are doing the same thing. Travel arrangements and costs for medical appointments that are directly related to hospitals in Muskoka are generally absorbed by the patient and often provided by this vast volunteer network.

The 60,000 permanent residents plus additional 100,000 seasonal property owners in this Muskoka that stretches from the Severn River in the south, to the western gates of Algonquin Park in the east, to Georgian Bay in the west and north to the southern boundaries of The Parry Sound District, support their own transportation costs for hospital visits. There is no free transportation, no network of bus routes or alternate transit around the 3,940 sq. km. that make up Muskoka.

There are so many other services and efforts provided within each of these two hospitals by volunteer service providers, both individually and through a whole network of service organizations. In the case of medical transportation for the multitudes of seniors in their community, the providers either absorb this transportation cost themselves or accept from the senior traveller whatever remuneration they are insistent on paying.

The current dual hospital scenario in Muskoka provides the most economically favourable solution to the travelling requirements of seniors, Veterans and other non-driving residents in the community. In fact, the entire group of volunteers within these hospitals provide a free service to those hospitals that is financially within their own budget. The single hospital concept would increase the transportation cost of those volunteers, many to the point of dropping the commitment. Not only will the seniors, Veterans and other non-driving residents suffer financially, but so will the entire network of volunteers.



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There would be a very small, very limited area of the Muskoka community who would benefit in travel expense to a single unit hospital in our community rather than travelling to a choice between the two existing hospitals. Any saving generated by a single unit hospital would be a saving to the Provincial Ministry only. The financial cost to the community in general, the tax payer, the volunteers, the Community service organizations, any of those who provide transportation and other volunteer services to that single unit hospital, no matter where in Muskoka it is located, will increase exponentially depending on the location of that hospital.

This is an increase in the cost of living to a segment of our society that Royal Canadian Legion, Zone E-5 cannot support. This is an increase in cost of services provided by a group of volunteers, many of whom will not be able to absorb the increase, no matter where that single unit hospital is located.

Royal Canadian Legion, Zone E-5 strongly suggests we cease this study of a single hospital unit in Muskoka. This District is too large in area, too spread out in population into too many surrounding small communities to be considering a single unit hospital. Let's direct our attention, our efforts, our financial resources to improving our two existing hospitals covering an area of approximately 4,000 sq. km. We should be planning, budgeting and working to maintain and improve both hospitals in the existing locations rather than attempting a single location.

Royal Canadian Legion: Zone E-5 strongly recommends that Muskoka Algonquin Health Care and The Ontario Ministry of Health refer to the Mission Statement of The Royal Canadian Legion and direct their efforts to the statement - - ACT IN THE SERVICE OF CANADA AND ITS COMMUNITIES." Our community will be best served by the full financial support, maintenance and constant modernization of the 2 existing hospital facilities in Muskoka.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION:

ZONE E-5

Allan Denne:

Legion Seniors Chair.