
COMMUNIQUÉ



7th Edition

August 27, 2013

The reason that these religious symbols have been on the Ouellette site is due to the fact that this site was operated as Catholic health care organization by the Religious Hospitalers of St. Joseph.

As a result of the realignment of services Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital will no longer be operating or governing the Ouellette site. Therefore, the denominational presence at the Ouellette campus ends on October 1 2013 and the Ouellette site is no longer a Catholic health care organization. However, Hôtel-Dieu Grace will be operating and governing healthcare services at the Tayfour site and as a result many of the religious symbols and artifacts will relocate to that site. Windsor Regional will continue to provide multi-faith chaplaincy services at the Ouellette site like it has for years at the Metropolitan and Tayfour sites.

It is important that you understand the significance of this change. As stated by Reverend Dr. Michael McGowan in his document *'Sponsorship of Catholic Health Care Institutions' (2005)* a "health care organization bearing the name "Catholic" has a special responsibility to witness to the presence of Christ and to Catholic teachings." Furthermore, Reverend McGowan noted in his document that the Catholic Health Association of Canada identified "tangible signs" that characterize Catholic health organizations including:

- Catholic sponsorship and management;
- A culture that supports Christian ethical values and spiritual beliefs;
- Recognition by the Bishop of the diocese that the organization is an integral part of the apostolate;
- Promotion of spiritual/religious care;
- Mission and values integration;
- The availability of the sacraments;
- The prominence of various Christian symbols.

It is important that you appreciate that this decision to realign services and transfer the Ouellette site means there are requirements that must be met regarding the Ouellette site. The transition of the Ouellette site means it will not be a ministry of the Catholic Church, it will not be sponsored by Catholic Health International, and it will not be governed or managed as a Catholic hospital; therefore, the removal of Christian symbols is necessary.

As Reverend Dr. Michael McGowan observed in 2005 that "acute care institutions such as hospitals are no longer viewed as the only form of involvement of church groups in the delivery of health care. A shift has been occurring away from active, acute care institutions to new areas covering community health, long term care, and even home health care."

In fact, a similar transition occurred in St Catharines in 2005 as Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital left its acute care site on Ontario Street, transferred the governance and management of that site to the Niagara Health System, and assumed governance and management of the Shaver Hospital that was then renamed Hôtel-Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre

As reported in the St Catharines Standard newspaper “Niagara underwent a radical restructuring of its hospitals and in 2005, Hôtel-Dieu Hospital was closed. Its acute-care services and patients were transferred to other hospitals in the area. But its legacy, rooted in the work of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph that founded it, would live on. The Shaver and adjoining Niagara Rehab were placed under the Dieu's management team. The new facility was renamed the Hôtel-Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre.” The Religious Hospitalers also transitioned out of acute care in Cornwall where they assumed responsibility for long term care, and in Kingston where they transferred acute inpatient care to Kingston General and now operate an ambulatory care centre including day surgery.

In 2009 the Windsor Star reported that “After 120 years of serving the community's sick and underprivileged, the Sisters of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph are leaving Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital.” This move came at the request of the Superior General of the RHSJ, Sister Marie-Thérèse Laliberté, who based the decision of the transfer on the diminishing number of Sisters. The Sisters who had the responsibility for and the sponsorship of Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital transferred their responsibility and sponsorship to Catholic Health International with headquarters in New Brunswick. As sponsor Catholic Health International continues the legacy of the Sisters by ensuring that the Catholic identity, Mission and Values endure through time to strengthen and enrich health care delivery. The change in role for Hôtel-Dieu Grace, the transfer of the Ouellette site to Windsor Regional, and the assumption of sponsorship for the Tayfour site was approved by Catholic Health International on behalf of the Sisters.

In our view, the most obvious way to recognize the legacy of the Sisters is by placing the programs and services on the Tayfour campus under the governance and management of Hôtel-Dieu Grace. In this way the legacy of Hôtel-Dieu Grace, “rooted in the work of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph that founded it” lives on. These programs and services on the Tayfour campus are vitally important in the community and are consistent with the Sister’s Ministry in health care. We also commissioned Marty Gervais, former Windsor Star journalist and author, to capture the remarkable 125 year journey by the Religious Hospitalers in Windsor, Ontario. This book gives you a behind-the-scenes look at the women who established the hospital and the challenges that had to be overcome at that time and throughout the hospital’s 125 years of service to this community. The book will be available for the 125th anniversary celebration in September.

The transition of the Ouellette site means it will not be a ministry of the Catholic Church, it will not be sponsored by Catholic Health International, and it will not be governed or managed as a Catholic hospital; therefore, the removal of Religious symbols is necessary.