



MEDIA RELEASE

January 25, 2016

For Immediate Release

#WEareready

Local leaders unite to support proposed hospital system for Windsor-Essex

WINDSOR - Support continues to build for a proposed new Windsor-Essex Hospital System to serve our region for decades to come, with local leaders uniting on Monday to let the province know that Windsor-Essex is ready to move to the next stage of the process.

Elected officials representing municipal and provincial offices have issued a letter to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to signify a regional commitment to seeing this much needed capital investment approved for our nearly 400,000 residents of the City and County.

Local leaders also gathered to celebrate the launch of #WEareready – a new hashtag that underlines our collective commitment to see this bold new vision for health care delivery in Windsor-Essex come to fruition.

The “Stage 1B” submission – an early but important stage of the necessary process to complete new hospital infrastructure projects – is under review by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The hospitals are ready to work with the Ministry through this approval stage and move to Stage 2, which would allow additional funds to flow so that we can begin designs and other important technical discussions for the proposed new facilities.

The plan, announced last July, would see the construction of a new, 1.6 million square foot state-of-the-art acute care hospital, an 80,000 square foot Urgent Care Centre built on the former Grace Hospital property, redevelopment at Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare’s (HDGH’s) Tayfour Campus, and an exciting opportunity for HDGH to return to Ouellette Ave. to support outpatient mental health services, chronic disease management and a community hub with partner organizations.

“Our community of Windsor and Essex County is being presented with an historic opportunity to transform and modernize our health care system. An estimated \$2 billion investment would not only bring a decade’s old system into the modern era. This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to reorient to a forward looking model of health care delivery,” said Taras Natyshak, MPP, Essex. “This transformation has been underway around the Province of Ontario, and until now Windsor Essex has not only been on the outside looking in, but we have been funding these investments through our taxes for other communities. Through the tremendous effort of

numerous individuals and organizations a plan to move forward is now ready to submit to the Ministry. It is time to speak with one voice. City, County, and people of all political stripes must now come together and relentlessly push to see this project through to completion. We are ready! I want to thank the committee and everyone who took the time to provide their input and their passion to the consultations. I look forward to the continued involvement of the public as this project progresses. There are certainly elements that still need to be worked on with respect to accessibility; however, there has been confirmation from both the City and County that this will be addressed during the ongoing planning process. I am confident that with input from across our region we will be able to build a hospital system which will serve us all incredibly well for many years to come.”

“The future of our health care in this region is just too important to be playing politics about our need for a modern hospital. We need to stand united and speak with one voice,” said Percy Hatfield, MPP, Windsor-Tecumseh. “We are at a critical junction and the team that got us to this point in the process needs to know we are totally behind their efforts as do the decision-makers in the Health Ministry in Toronto.”

“People living in Windsor Essex deserve access to the high quality, modern medical facilities that this investment will deliver. Fully resourced and staffed healthcare institutions are essential to the success and viability our region,” said Lisa Gretzky, MPP, Windsor West. “The construction of an urgent care centre at the site of the former Grace Hospital, significant investments at the Ouellette campus and the Tayfour campus, as well as access to modern facilities and the quality care that our dedicated health care professionals provide, is welcome news for Windsor and in particular the residents of Windsor West. “By coming together today the city, county and provincial representatives for the region are showing our commitment to working together to move this project forward. At this early stage of the planning process we recognize that there is significant work to be done, ongoing issues to be addressed and continued community consultation to take place. These are all standard and important steps in a capital planning process of this magnitude. Residents of Windsor West can rest assured that I am committed to working with decision makers at all levels of government, to ensure that this transformation of our region's healthcare system includes affordable transportation access for all residents, as well as access to and availability of our regions healthcare professionals. The ongoing involvement of the community is vital as this process continues to move forward.”

“The City of Windsor and the County of Essex have both made a commitment to a new vision for hospital care in our region,” said Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens. “We truly appreciate standing next to our Provincial representatives in unity to move this important project forward. A single site acute care hospital is the cornerstone of the transformation in the delivery of health care in Windsor Essex. We are ready to move to stage two and ask the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to help us realize this vision. Our residents deserve nothing less.”

“In December 2015, our County Council, representing seven municipalities, voted unanimously in favour of a commitment on behalf of residents of the County of Essex towards a local contribution to this vitally important infrastructure project for our region,” said Tom Bain, Warden, Essex County. “We recognize the importance of this significant capital investment in modernizing our health care for future generations. We are proud to stand with our partners from the City of Windsor and our provincial representatives in expressing our collective desire to see this new vision for hospital care in our region become reality.”

“From the start of this planning, some four years ago, we stated the only way we will be able to move this project through to completion is with united regional leadership. Well today I am honoured to stand with our local City, County and Provincial MPPs showing our unity and making a request to move this project to the important Stage 2 of the capital planning process,” said David Musyj, President and CEO, Windsor Regional Hospital. “We will remember this day and these individuals when this project is approved for construction and eventually completed. We thank them now and will continue to thank them for generations to come. I am truly appreciative to see our elected community leaders coming together today and committing to this future and recognizing that we need to speak as one voice to make this a reality.”

“Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare has been a key partner in the planning process that has seen the initial discussion about a new acute care hospital evolve into a plan for a comprehensive, thoughtful and well integrated health system. A highlight is that we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a seamless mental health system - which will absolutely change the lives of many in our community,” said Janice Kaffer, President and CEO, Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare. “From the investment at our Tayfour Campus and the proposed mental health anchor programming on Ouellette Avenue to the Urgent Care Centre and state-of-the-art acute care hospital - this proposal ensures high quality healthcare will be available for my children and my grandchildren. I am proud to stand alongside other community leaders who are committed to this future as well and believe that together we will succeed.”

Attached is a copy of the letter sent to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care today.

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For further information contact:

Steve Erwin

Manager, Government and Community Relations, Corporate Communications
Windsor Regional Hospital
519-564-4902 (cell) / steve.erwin@wrh.on.ca

Allison Johnson

Manager, Communications, Windsor Regional Hospital
519-995-0577 / allison.johnson@wrh.on.ca



Taras Natyshak, MPP, Essex
Lisa Gretzky, MPP, Windsor West
Percy Hatfield, MPP, Windsor-Tecumseh

To: The Hon. Eric Hoskins
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

CC: David Musyj, President and CEO, Windsor Regional Hospital
Janice Kaffer, President and CEO, Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare
Martin Girash, Chair, Erie St. Clair LHIN

From: Drew Dilkens, Mayor, City of Windsor
Tom Bain, Warden, County of Essex
Taras Natyshak, MPP, Essex
Percy Hatfield, MPP Windsor-Tecumseh
Lisa Gretzky, MPP Windsor West

Mon., Jan. 25, 2016

Dear Minister Hoskins,

Three years ago, your predecessor, the Hon. Deb Matthews, approved an initial planning grant for the hospitals serving Windsor and Essex County to begin the process of developing a bold new vision for hospital care in our region.

Since that time hundreds of dedicated professionals, volunteers and local leaders have engaged our communities in formulating a vision that aims to serve our region for decades to come.

The consensus remains clear: the nearly 400,000 residents of Windsor and Essex County need, and deserve, modernized health care infrastructure that embraces the best of new hospital technology, state-of-the-art facilities, and modern design, capable of servicing our entire region.

Most of our existing hospital infrastructure is decades old. Needed investments in the past 10 years have helped bridge this gap, but our facilities have not kept pace with modern and new capabilities seen in Ontario hospitals that have been granted new construction investments over the past decade.

Only a quarter of our hospital patient rooms are private, far off the 80% mark seen in new hospitals today, reducing privacy for patients while increasing the risk of infection. Our aging infrastructure leaves little room on patient floor hallways to properly store the life-saving equipment our patients rely on, and to best accommodate the workplace needs of present day professionals. Our campus architecture built for a health care era of the past falls well short of the best new hospital designs that expedite a critical patient's journey from the emergency room to an operating room.

Our thousands of dedicated health care professionals deserve to work in facilities equipped with the latest concepts that remove remaining structural barriers they must surpass to continue providing the best and safest care possible for our patients.

Our patients deserve the dignity of being cared for in new facilities that make their visit or prolonged stay as comforting and welcoming as they can possibly be.

Dozens of new hospitals have been constructed over the past 15 years - involving billions of dollars in investments that lifted much of our provincial health care infrastructure out of risk of decay.

As Canadians, we hold our public health care system as a treasure. As citizens, we expect that a health care experience in one jurisdiction should be as close as possible to an experience in any other. As the years go by, however, we know that our hospitals are falling further behind the standard enjoyed in dozens of other Ontario communities.

Windsor and Essex County taxpayers have paid their contributions to support new hospital investments throughout the province, along with all other Ontarians. It's now time for all Ontarians to help support needed investments in Windsor-Essex.

Our patients and front-line health care workers deserve nothing less.

We are ready.

We have communicated with thousands of Windsor- Essex residents. So many have positively contributed to our development of a new and revitalized health care system, and their input and vision is reflected in the bold and exciting Stage 1 plan we submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for review. We, along with the hospitals, are committed to continuing the community consultation as we move through the capital planning process.

We're ready to move to the next stage of this important process.

We, the elected municipal and provincial leaders of our region, are unified in our collective support for this project which is vital to the future of health care in Windsor and Essex County.

We look forward to working together to see this vision become reality. Please help us get to Stage 2 of the planning process now.

Sincerely,

Drew Dilkens, Mayor of Windsor

Taras Natyshak, MPP, Essex

Tom Bain, Warden, County of Essex

Percy Hatfield, MPP, Windsor-Tecumseh

Lisa Gretzky, MPP, Windsor West