

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Excerpt from Hansard Transcripts – March 10, 2009

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, many of my constituents in Cambridge and North Dumfries are gravely concerned and unsettled by the persistent reports that your ministry has plans to downsize Cambridge Memorial Hospital from a full-scale community hospital to an urgent care centre. Will you assure the 135,000 residents of Cambridge and North Dumfries that there is no plan in the works by your ministry to downsize this strong and vibrant community hospital?

Hon. David Caplan: I certainly want to thank the member for the question. I know he's advocating on behalf of his community. There are in fact no plans by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to take the actions that the member described.

I can tell you that I know that the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network has been working with the hospital and will continue to do so in an effort to continue to provide the quality of care that residents would want, and achieve a balanced budget position. Cambridge Memorial Hospital and the Waterloo Wellington LHIN share the same goal: planning for the future and having a sustainable health care system for the residents of Cambridge. I support those actions and that collaborative effort. I am encouraged, and I encourage both sides to continue the local dialogue, a meaningful results-based planning approach, on behalf of the broader Cambridge community.

We're going to continue to support the LHIN and we're going to continue to support Cambridge Memorial Hospital as it moves forward to provide outstanding-

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Durham will withdraw his comment, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Minister, like 80% of the hospitals in this province, Cambridge Memorial Hospital is in a deficit position. As Premier McGuinty has asked the Canadian government for fair treatment for Ontarians in need of health care, I too am demanding fairness of health care funding for Cambridge and the region of Waterloo, where hospitals continue to be shortchanged.

Will you play fair by implementing immediately a population needs-based funding formula for hospitals as promised? The province has received \$900 million in extra

health care dollars from the Canadian government, so this is an opportune moment to adopt the Premier's sentiment that fairness in funding is a perfect solution to meeting the health care needs of Ontario.

Hon. David Caplan: I want to thank the member.

The facts that he presents in this House are not correct. The provincial government has not received \$900 million in federal funding, so that's simply incorrect. But I can tell you that this member's advocacy would have been welcomed, because upon taking office back in 1995, this member and his colleagues cut funding for Cambridge Memorial Hospital some 5.5%. I want to contrast that to the support that members on this side of the House have for Cambridge Memorial Hospital. When Cambridge Memorial CEO Julia Dumanian says, "We put ourselves under the microscope all the time so we welcome the opportunity to work with this external team on creative ways to closing the gap between"-