

Construction on residential hospice set for fall

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Artist's rendering of the Dr. Bob Kemp Hospice's Centre for Hospice Palliative Care

The Dr. Bob Kemp Hospice recently became the only hospice in Ontario to receive a Hospice Association of Ontario Level 2 accreditation.

One of four hospices to pass Level 1, it surpassed all targets and indicators to receive the two-year, Level 2 accreditation for its volunteer visiting program. This recognizes the organization's work in areas including selection of volunteers and care of clients and caregivers.



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Staff and volunteers are excited to bring that exceptional service to clients and caregivers at the long-awaited Centre for Hospice Palliative Care on the south-central Mountain.

Executive Director Beth Ellis said the goal is to start building in the fall.

Hospice staff have been quietly approaching local businesses to help raise the \$4.2 million required to build the 13,940 square-foot hospice. Hospice supporter Iris Berryman donated the 1.25 acres of vacant land on Stone Church Road East near Upper Wellington. One million dollars will be set aside as an endowment for future operational expenses.

Since there is no charge for hospice services, fundraising is extremely important for the non-profit organization. Ms. Ellis said a public fundraising campaign will be announced soon and the group will apply for a variety of provincial grants.

The 10-bed hospice will be a first of its kind in Ontario. In addition to residential care, it will expand services currently provided at its Wardrope Avenue location in Stoney Creek, including an expanded day hospice program in partnership with other agencies, an expanded bereavement support program for adults and children and education space for volunteer caregivers.

"There will be 24-hour registered nursing care and will provide support for caregivers and family," Ms. Ellis said. "It's about the comfort and dignity of the patient."

The average length of stay at a residential hospice is between 18-24 days. The hospice will be able to offer beds to about 200 people a year.

The need for this service in the area was proven in a study, not to mention calls to the Dr. Bob Kemp

Hospice.

Maureen Talbot, director of volunteer and bereavement programs, said the hospice used to receive about 10-15 inquiries a year about residential care. It now receives about eight a month.

Staff try to send those in need to Carpenter House in Burlington or other facilities, which are not true hospices.

More than 40 hospices in the province are looking to build residential centres after the provincial government last year identified hospice palliative care as a core service. The government announced it would provide operational funding for residential hospices.

Ms. Ellis chaired the committee that drafted standards for residential hospices in Ontario, which the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is using as a template.

Eighty per cent of people in Ontario want to die at home, while only six per cent get that chance, said Ms. Ellis. A residential hospice provides a home-like atmosphere, as clients can bring in personal belongings and be surrounded by loved ones at all times.

"End of life should have the same respect as beginning of life," Ms. Talbot said.

Ms. Ellis said hospitals are not for the dying.

"We have a phenomenal medical system. It gives us a lot of choice. We live longer with disease, but the disease process is fairly traumatic for those going through it, as well as their family members. It's difficult to do in the home," Ms. Ellis said.

"Also our clients are getting younger and sometimes they don't want the memory for their children of them dying at home."

Ms. Talbot said the average age of Dr. Kemp clients is 53-55 years old. The office and its more than 100 volunteers provide support services to more than 600 people and their families. Province-wide it is estimated hospices serve an additional five people attached to each patient.

Mayor Larry Di Ianni is the honorary co-chair, along with Dr. Bob Kemp, of the hospice's Circle of Life fundraising campaign for the residential centre on the Mountain.

At least 12 full and part-time nurses will be hired and six service staff from the Stoney Creek office will move to the Mountain location. Ms. Ellis said the hospice board of directors will decide what will happen to the Wardrobe Avenue location.

Contributions from area residents will make the new centre possible.

"The community will make the decision as to when it will open. This will be a community driven project," Ms. Ellis said. "I believe in the community. I believe it will support the hospice. I believe it cares for people at end of life."

Dr. Bob Kemp Hospice is looking for volunteers. Anyone interested, can call Donna Thomson at (905) 664-4652.

Church groups, service groups or other organizations interested in a presentation on the Centre for Hospice Palliative Care or the hospice's services can call the same phone number.

Mountain location a first for Hamilton

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Beth Ellis Executive director Dr. Bob Kemp Hospice