

Ontario provides \$5 million for new hospital campus

Provincial funding will support the creation of a new, state-of-the-art hospital in York Region. As part of its plan to build a stronger, more resilient health care system that is better prepared to respond to crisis, the Ontario government is investing \$5 million to expand Southwark Regional Health Centre. This funding will support planning to build a new state-of-the-art hospital and the money will also redevelop the existing site to meet the growing demand for services and improve access to high-quality health care for residents of York Region and Simcoe County.

“Expanding Southlake is a critical part of our government’s plan to build a stronger, more resilient health care system in York Region and Simcoe County,” said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “For far too long, these fast-growing communities have dealt with hallway health care. With this investment, we’re telling families that we will ensure that they will have access to the high-quality care they need, close to home.”

Despite serving some of the fastest growing communities in Ontario, Southlake has not received a significant acute care expansion since 2003. Since then, the number of patients treated in the hospital’s emergency department has nearly doubled and the hospital is regularly overcapacity and often has the largest number of hallway beds in the Central Region of Ontario. This investment will help Southlake plan its phased expansion to become a two-site hospital system that can meet the needs of the growing communities it serves now and for generations to come. More than 100 new inpatient beds are planned to be added to Southlake, bringing the total number of beds to over 600. The new beds will help the world-class team at Southlake continue to provide high-quality care and end hallway health care in York Region and Simcoe County.

“This investment will ensure Ontario builds a new state-of-art hospital for families in King, Vaughan and across York Region, which will bring the total bed count at Southlake to over 600 beds. The two-site Southlake expansion plan will transform care in our community to become a two-site hospital system that can meet the needs of families today and into the future,” said King-Vaughan MPP Stephen Lecce. Lecce also has plenty of praise for Elliott and her ministry’s efforts.

“Christine has been a tremendous partner through the pandemic and beyond. We worked closely together, pretty much every day over the past two years, to protect students, families, and the community. I am grateful for her dedication to our community, for her public service and legacy she leaves behind” from strengthening mental health to the redeveloping of Southlake Hospital.

“Planning for the new state-of-the-art hospital will also include expanded acute and post-acute care, critical care and emergency care, diagnostic imaging, surgery and mental health care. In addition, Southlake’s expansion will transform the current Davis Drive site into a modern ambulatory care centre. As phases of the project are completed, families will be able to look forward to increased access to multiple integrated inpatient and outpatient services.”

On behalf of the nearly 6,000 staff, physicians, volunteers and learners at Southlake I would like to thank the provincial government for supporting our vision of a state-of-the-art two-site hospital system,” said Arden Krystal, Southlake’s president and CEO. “(This) historic announcement represents a major milestone in our organization’s 100-year history and will ensure that Southlake has the necessary infrastructure to continue to care for our rapidly growing communities for decades to come. To the communities we serve who have always rallied around the hospital, with this monumental announcement Southlake will be able to stay by your side.”

Ontario is working with Southlake on the early stages of the planning process, which include identifying programming, operational and space requirements and assessing how the project can meet the health care needs of patients and families in the region. Southlake provides a wide range of health care services to patients in York Region and Simcoe County, including advanced regional programs such as cancer care and cardiac care. More than 110,000 patients visit the hospital’s emergency department every year, making it the fourth busiest emergency department in Ontario. In 2021, the government announced over \$6.5 million to support the expansion of Southlake’s Adult Inpatient Mental Health Unit, which will add 12 new mental health beds and support spaces to better address the demand for mental health supports and services in York Region and Simcoe County.

As part of the government’s over \$1.2 billion investment to help hospitals recover from financial pressures created and worsened by COVID-19, Southlake received over \$7 million for 2020-21 lost revenue to provide financial stability and support continued high-quality patient care, and \$18.5 million to help cover historic working funds deficits. To support high-quality care in York Region and Simcoe County, the government increased Southlake’s operating funding for the third straight year. In 2021-22, the hospital received over \$10.3 million in additional operating funding, representing an increase of three per cent to the operating funding the hospital received in 2020-21. As part of the government’s \$760 million commitment in the 2021 Budget to support over 3,100 additional hospital beds during the COVID-19 pandemic, Southlake received funding for up to 10 acute care beds, 26 transitional beds and six critical care beds. To support growing demands on the health care system, Ontario’s investments over the next 10 years will lead to \$30 billion in health infrastructure across the province. These

investments will increase capacity in hospitals, build new health care facilities and renew existing hospitals and community health centres. Southlake plays a critical role in the health and well-being of residents in York-Simcoe, and our government's investment of \$5 million to expand the centre is a major win for our community. By building a new state-of-the-art hospital and redeveloping existing infrastructure, we are making sure that the needs of our rapidly growing region continue to be met by high-quality care," said Caroline Mulroney, MPP York-Simcoe.