



Brant Community Healthcare System Pre-Budget Consultation Submission

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy
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Further to the Brant Community Healthcare Systems presentation at the pre-budget consultation session with the Ministry of Finance held on January 25, 2022, please find attached our written submission and request to move planning for the redevelopment of the Brant Community Healthcare System from the Pre-Capital Submission Phase to Stage 1 of planning and a planning grant of \$3M. We would like to thank MPP Will Bouma for facilitating the pre-budget consultation session with the Ministry of Finance.

Supervision ended at Brant Community Healthcare System on December 31, 2019. The Board of Directors at BCHS has worked through the recommendations contained in the Investigators Report and the Supervisor's final report to the Minister of Health. One item remains outstanding, **that is the need for the urgent redevelopment of the Brant Community Healthcare System.**

The Brant Community Healthcare system operates on two hospital sites, the Willett site in Paris and the Brantford General Site in Brantford. BCHS has a funded capacity of 321 inpatient beds but most days it operates well overcapacity, caring for on many days 350 or more inpatients with the majority of our inpatient units and the emergency department housing patients in hallways. The community of Brantford is growing and there is simply insufficient hospital capacity to support the rapidly growing population. We are busy seeing over 78,000 patients annually in our emergency department and urgent care centre.

Our community is concerned with the state of the physical infrastructure at BCHS. The B-Wing and E-Wing of the building are particularly old and determined unsuitable for redevelopment as locations for inpatient care. BCHS has only 11 private patient rooms and managing the isolation requirements of patients during this pandemic has created extraordinary logistical challenges. The current infrastructure fails to comply with standards and expectations related to accessibility, senior's care and children friendly space. Highlighted through this pandemic was inadequacy of BCHS's ventilation systems. In accommodating the requirements for negative pressure capacity during this pandemic BCHS was faced

with significant challenges in retrofitting care spaces to meet standard. These changes while effective were temporary. We do not meet the standards of what is expected in a modern healthcare facility.

In the Supervisor's final report to the Minister of Health she stated:

There remains an urgent need to move forward with a full capital redevelopment of the very old Brantford site to create an appropriate physical environment for mental health, emergency care and other inpatients cared for at BCHS.

BCHS submitted an updated pre-capital submission to the Ministry of Health in February 2020. The development of the pre-capital submission was overseen and endorsed by members of the Master Planning Steering Committee as follows:

- BCHS Patient Representative
- Mayors of Brantford and Brant County
- Chiefs of Mississauga's of the Credit First Nations and Six Nations
- BCHS Board Chair
- Chair and Executive Director of BCHS Foundation
- Former MPP and Speaker of the House, Former MP Phil McColeman; and Current MP Larry Brock and MPP Will Bouma.

MPP Will Bouma has been highly supportive and behind the need for the community to move planning forward. There is community support for our plan but growing frustration at the lack of progress in moving planning forward. Planning needs to advance urgently but this requires government approval.

The pre-capital submission has been endorsed by Ontario Health and, in September 2020, staff with the Ministry of Health Capital Branch indicating they had no further questions regarding the submission, and were awaiting government direction related to prioritization.

We have had continued discussion with Ministry staff who remain supportive of our pre-capital submission and the urgency to move forward to Stage 1 of planning.

Senior Ministry staff visited our site on November 1, 2021 and their resolve to supporting our need for redevelopment was reinforced.

However, this requires political approval and it is completely within the hands of government to make this decision. The ability of the hospital to support new standards for patient care for a rapidly growing community requires immediate attention.

We are requesting that the BCHS is approved to move forward from the Pre-Capital Phase to Stage-1 of planning. This will require a Planning Grant estimated at \$3M. We need permission to plan but to date this has been denied to the community of Brantford.

We can say with confidence, this approval will come as welcome news to members of the BCHS Master Planning Steering Committee representing the Board and viewed positively by the citizens and communities served by BCHS, providing hope and excitement for those who work hard each day to provide exceptional care to the people we serve. This next step forward is critical to the community, and the future sustainability of our local health care system.

Current Infrastructure Challenges

The accommodations for the majority of adult medical and surgical inpatients, and pediatric inpatient care, is old and crowded. As I have previously stated, we have only 11 private rooms and the ventilation systems in our inpatient areas are completely inadequate. The absence of private capacity significantly impacts our ability to efficiently care for patients and creates challenges for privacy and infection prevention and control. The current pandemic has only accentuated this issue.

The current infrastructure fails to comply with standards related to accessibility, senior's care and children friendly space. There is almost the complete absence of any reflection and space for the Indigenous communities that are served by the Brant Community Healthcare System. This is despite being connected to the largest indigenous community in Canada.

Our Mental Health Inpatient Unit is substandard. The corridors are narrow and the rooms small. Recent investments by the Ministry on the unit have made a significant difference in the safety of staff and patients, however, these should be viewed as interim improvements until more suitable space for Mental Health patients is created.

Finally, this a matter of equity. Partner hospitals surrounding Brantford are all being modernized. Communities including Cambridge, Woodstock, Oakville, Kitchener and Niagara have all had capital redevelopments that have significantly improved their facilities, and other surrounding organizations are in more advanced stages of planning.

We are simply asking to be given the approval and resources to plan for the future needs of Brantford.

A Strategic Vision for the Growing Healthcare Needs of our Community

The Brant Community Healthcare System is undersized to meet the current and future needs of the population it serves. Pre-COVID it operated 295 beds. It regularly functions well over capacity. Based on population modeling by 2023/24 BCHS will require 355 beds and by 2038 the number of beds required will be 445. These projections are based on the conservative population estimates from the Ministry of Finance. Local estimates of population growth will have to be considered as planning advances. We fully anticipate the next phase of planning will demonstrate a need from more inpatient capacity than assumed in the Pre-Capital submission. Also, these projections assume improvements in the reduction of Alternative Level of Care bed use, otherwise the need will be greater again. Brantford and Brant's current beds per 1000 population is below the provincial average of 1.4 beds per 1000 and falling. It is far below the Canadian average of 2 beds per 1000 population.

The proposed new facility as detailed in the pre-capital submission to the Ministry of Health will allow for the expansion of existing services to meet the growing population it serves and provide the opportunity to deliver new services. It will retain more recent investments made in the D Wing of the building. It also contemplates the continued use and redevelopment of the Willett site of the BCHS.

Through the introduction of modernized building technology BCHS will improve its operational efficiency, reduce BCHS's environmental footprint, and ongoing maintenance costs. It will support modern patient care technology and information technology to support patient care, improving the flow of information between providers. It will be an enabler in the recruitment of highly-skilled and qualified health care providers and facilitate the BCHS's role as a partner in an evolving Ontario Health Team.

Caring for vulnerable populations is central to BCHS's strategic plan. The new building infrastructure will better enable BCHS to meet the need of priority populations including seniors, children, people living with mental health and addictions issues, and those requiring accommodation through improvements in building accessibility standards. Consistent with our Emergency Department redevelopment design plans, the building will reflect the Indigenous populations served by the BCHS. This means that it should leave space for Indigenous practitioners to practice medicine that reflects traditional medical and western practices, aligning to the Indigenous guiding principles of "Two-Eyed Seeing".

The proposed redevelopment will occur in phases over the next number of years. The first phase of the redevelopment plan is the renovation and expansion of the BCHS's Emergency Department. This will be followed by the construction of a new tower in the lands adjacent to the existing facility to accommodate the majority of acute hospital services. The final phase will involve the renovation and demolition of some of its existing infrastructure. The proposed plan will allow for future expansion. This will occur over a 20 year time period but it is essential that we are able to move forward with this planning forward immediately. Otherwise, none of this will happen.

In summary, the Brant Community Healthcare System is requesting approval to move it's planning from the Pre-capital phase to Stage 1 and a planning grant of \$3M to complete this work.

The communities served by the BCHS deserve reliable, safe and equitable access to health care. We thank you for your time and consideration in our request to take this necessary step towards building a sustainable local health care system for our community.