

## HHCC funded for 8 additional beds ahead of flu season

By Jasen Obermeyer

Headwaters Health Care Centre has received provincial funding for eight additional beds, to help the hospital with wait times for patients during the upcoming influenza season.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care recently announced its plans to make more than 2,000 additional beds and spaces available this year, helping improve patient care and reduce wait times. The funding provided for the additional beds at Headwaters is temporary to this year.

"Our government is taking action to ensure people across Ontario have access to the care they need, when and where they need it," Ontario Health Minister Eric Hoskins said in a news release.

Peter Varga, Headwater's Vice President, Patient Care and Chief Nursing Executive, says this is a strategy plan, an early step to prepare for the flu season. "We're actually taking a proactive approach as we enter into flu season."

He says the flu season "is a tough time for everyone," and Headwaters usually gets "a significant number of patients requiring admission."

Headwaters is planned and budgeted for 73 beds.

As the weeks unfold, Mr. Varga says he anticipates more patients coming through the hospital, as the flu season hasn't gone in full swing yet.

He adds it's very important to have these beds. "Having access to these beds, gives us the ability to move patients through the system more effectively, whereas in absence of the beds, patients are delayed in the emergency room, they're being delayed in their ability to be transferred to the floor."

Mr. Varga says that having had four rooms closed because of mould found in the bathrooms has not impacted the hospitals' ability to care for patients. "We have capacity in other areas."

He says the four rooms are expected to be back in service within two to four weeks. "The change now is just to restore the rooms, and put everything back together."

In discussing reports that this flu season is expected to be more severe, Mr. Varga says they are prepared for it, and despite the projection, the severity of the flu seasons "remains to be seen."