

For immediate release on:  
Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2003

## **York Central Hospital Gets Green Light: Hospital Receives Approval to Proceed with Major Expansion**

Richmond Hill, Ontario – It was announced today by Frank Klees and Tina Molinari, on behalf of Minister of Health and Long Term Care Tony Clement, that York Central Hospital has received final approval to proceed with Phase One of a major expansion. The \$66.7 million dollar project will be the first major expansion to the Hospital's acute care facilities since the building of the Langstaff Wing in 1972. Construction is expected to begin in March 2004 on Phase One. The total cost of Phases One and Two is estimated at \$150 million. This expansion will significantly enhance the Hospital's ability to meet the growing needs of one of Canada's fastest growing urban communities.

"Healthcare is our government's number one priority and today's announcement adds to our record investments in healthcare we've made every year since 1995," said Minister of Transportation and MPP for Oak Ridges, Frank Klees. "Our commitment to healthcare means faster and improved access to high quality healthcare services for the people of the York Region area."

"Working together to benefit all those served by York Central is the goal of this facility expansion," said Tina Molinari, Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and MMP for Thornhill. "Having worked closely with the administration of this hospital over the past four years, I know that the plan being proposed will result in a tangible improvement in health care delivery for area residents."

Work on Phase One is expected to cost over \$65 million, and be completed in 2006. Phase One of the Hospital's expansion will add 145,822 square feet that will:

- Triple the size of Emergency, enhancing patient privacy, comfort and confidentiality;
- Double the size of the Critical Care Unit from the current 10 beds to 25 beds;
- Add capacity for 72 new medical/surgical beds in two patient floors;
- Significantly expand Diagnostic Imaging to provide increased support for the expanded Emergency, Critical Care and Medical/Surgical services;

- Create a state-of-the-art Birthing Centre with birthing facilities, post-partum care, and a neo-natal intensive care nursery all on the same floor;

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- Provide much needed Schedule One Mental Health Facilities including 5 new secured beds;
- Improve access to the Hospital's Fracture Clinic and the York Region Dialysis Program; and
- Create 41 negative pressure rooms, for patients who have to be isolated due to highly infectious diseases.

“Today marks another milestone in our journey toward better health care for every member of our community. Our entire York Central Hospital team is thrilled that the shovels will soon be going into the ground. We want to thank the countless individuals whose unrelenting hard work and support helped to make this vision a reality,” says Asmita Gillani, Acting President and CEO of York Central Hospital.

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## **Background Information: Hospital Expansion Needed to Support Growing Community**

The incredible growth of York Central's service area of Southwest York Region has driven expansion. The Hospital's primary service area includes some of Canada's fastest-growing communities including Richmond Hill, Vaughan, Thornhill, Aurora and King Township. According to the Region of York Planning Department, this area will grow from 358,000 people in 2001 to 414,000 in 2006, 470,000 in 2011, 514,000 in 2016 and 549,000 in 2021.

"While beneficial for the local economy, this growth puts tremendous pressure on the hospital's services. We're seeing not only greater numbers of patients, but increased rates of serious illnesses in our community, both of which place a strain on our physical capacity," notes Gillani.

In an ER, built to handle 25,000 patients, YCH expects to see 67,000 patients this year, making it one of the busiest Emergency Departments in the GTA. The backlog in Emergency will be eased by adding new patients beds, and by renovating the department to accommodate upwards of 80,000 patient visits a year.

"In addition to adding space and cutting waiting times, the revamped Emergency will offer greater privacy in the treatment areas, and faster access to x-rays and other diagnostic tests," says Dr. Nalin Ahluwalia, YCH's Chief of Emergency Medicine.

In April, the Town of Richmond Hill approved YCH's site plan, and in July the Ministry of Health approved the hospital's "headstart" projects. That means that important work can begin – the renovations of the Special Procedures Room, to create a state-of-the-art angioplasty suite, and the relocation of the Fracture Clinic – paving the way for the rest of the redevelopment. YCH received more good news in July, with the announcement of funding for the hospital's first Magnetic Resonance Imager (MRI), strengthening the diagnostic abilities within York Region.

