

New funding will support surgeries, upkeep at Southlake



A further investment of \$6.3 million by the Provincial Government will help Southlake Regional Health Centre provide more surgical care for local residents and support critical upgrades to ensure the hospital's longevity.

The funding was announced at Southlake on October 16 by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy.

The newly-announced funding breaks down to \$4 million in support of surgical care this year and \$2.3 million for repairs and infrastructure upgrades.

"This is to extend the life of the hospital and our community infrastructure," she said. "In June, our government announced an investment of an additional \$965 million as part of the 2024 Ontario Budget, which includes a four per cent increase for an unprecedented second year in a row to increase access to high quality care and ensure our public hospitals are able to meet patients' needs. Today, I am pleased to announce a 5.7 annualization increase to Southlake for their surgical operations. This is a total investment for 2024-25 of \$22,706,000."

This equated to \$4 million more for 2024, she noted, to "support the stabilization and management of the surgical system, maximizing capacity to increase the number of surgeries performed." As such, the funding will help reduce wait times.

"This year's \$228 million to support critical upgrades and repairs at 129 hospitals and 58 community healthcare facilities marks a 25 per cent increase in health infrastructure renewal fund since 2018," said MPP Gallagher Murphy. "This investment allows more hospitals to complete upgrades and repairs in a timely manner. I am committed to ensure we serve this community and to ensure that people can have access to a more connected and convenient emergency care close to home."

While Southlake warmly welcomed the money towards surgical care, they underscored the importance of funding for services not often seen by patients.

"There's a lot more going on behind the scenes, including important building systems," said Nathan Robinson, Director of Capital of Development for Southlake. "Southlake has been here 100 years, so not surprisingly some of our infrastructure has changed over those years. Many of those renovations are not flashy and they're not even visible to the public, but they do make a significant difference to the experience of the staff and the patients, and if they didn't happen they would notice that difference."

"The \$2.3 million will allow more of that type of renovations, including renovations to select components of our critical electrical and HVAC systems. These are things that patients don't really see, but they're going to make a really material difference and, frankly, they're going to keep the lights on."

Puneet Sandhu, Southlake's Director of Surgical and Maternal Child Programs, said for the last 100 years the hospital has been creating the best experiences for both our patients and our teams, and this year's anniversary marks 100 years of innovating and standing side by side with our communities to foster a healthier future and 100 years of leading-edge care close to home.

That legacy is one we're very proud to continue, she said.

Added Newmarket Mayor John Taylor: Southlake is our community's most important asset, full stop. That is something we all have to work at all the time to ensure it can continue to deliver the way it needs to deliver. It touches the lives of virtually every resident in our communities, either directly or indirectly, whether it is one of their loved ones, their neighbour or themselves.

We ask the nurses, the doctors, all of the staff here to provide leading-edge care and that's a big task; in order to do that we have to make sure they have facilities that are leading-edge as well and we need to make sure we get that funded whether that is through things like the incredibly successful gala recently or through our support from the Provincial government and Dawn Gallagher Murphy.

By Brock Weir