His Worship Fred Eisenberger
Mayor
City of Hamilton
Hamilton City Centre
Suite 230, 77 James Street North
Hamilton ON L8R 2K9

Dear Mayor Eisenberger:

Thank you for your letter regarding emergency health services.

The McGuinty government is working hard to improve health care, and on May 30, 2008, I announced a $109 million action plan that targets emergency room delays. Our plan includes an emergency department performance fund, information technology enhancements, and coaching teams to enhance hospital efficiency.

We are also investing in nurses dedicated to easing emergency department offload delays, nursing support in long-term care homes to avoid preventable hospitalization, home care improvements, and electronic links between hospitals and Community Care Access Centres.

A key part of our plan involves creating more capacity for alternate level of care (ALC) patients outside the hospital system. For example, we are providing $2,315,339 to Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network for ALC programs. By discharging ALC patients sooner, we will create space for new patients to be admitted to hospital from the ER.

You also mentioned concerns about Central Ambulance Control Centres (CACCs). I would note that the CACC’s schedule includes on-site supervision. In addition, the CACC has 24-hour, seven-day-a-week management coverage through a combination of on-site and on-call procedures. Since 2006, my ministry has provided the municipality of Hamilton with $3,597,304 in additional base funding to assist with the costs of providing land ambulance services.

Thank you again for writing and sharing your council’s concerns.

Yours truly,

George Smitherman
Deputy Premier, Minister