



CITY OF PORT COLBORNE
TOWNSHIP OF WAINFLEET

**COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO THE
NIAGARA HEALTH SYSTEM
HOSPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**Submitted to the
Board of Directors
Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant
Local Health Integration Network
and
The Honourable David Caplan
Minister of Health and Long Term Care
October 30, 2008**



PORT COLBORNE

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October 30, 2008

Ms. Juanita Gledhill, Chair
and Members of the Board
Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant
Local Health Integration Network
264 Main Street East
Grimsby, Ontario L3M 1P8

Dear Chair Gledhill and Members of the Board:

Please find enclosed the response of the citizens of the City of Port Colborne and the Township of Wainfleet to the Niagara Health System's Hospital Improvement Plan.

Our community has devoted considerable time to preparing a thoughtful and realistic response to the HIP, therefore, we trust that the LHIN will carefully consider our comments and suggestions for improving the proposals included in the HIP.

There are a number of critical issues that I would like to highlight for your consideration.

First, as you know, the HIP was prepared in response to a projected operating deficit of \$18 million at the NHS, representing approximately 6% of its operating budget. Dr. Kitts made it very clear in his presentation to you on October 28, 2008 that the NHS HIP will not achieve this. We are aware that similar organizations with similar operating deficits (most recently the Kingston General Hospital) were the subject of an "independent third party" operational review. I believe that a similar approach should have been taken at the NHS before a major transformational plan was developed without community consultation.

In our view the NHS HIP is not so much about either creating Centres of Excellence or solving an \$18 million budget deficit but is really about solving a HR crisis in staffing the Hospitals in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland by the effective closure of the Port Colborne and Fort Erie Hospitals and the transfer of their staff to these sites.

During his presentation to you, Dr. Kitts solidified the quality and need of the staff currently working at the Port Colborne and Fort Erie sites.