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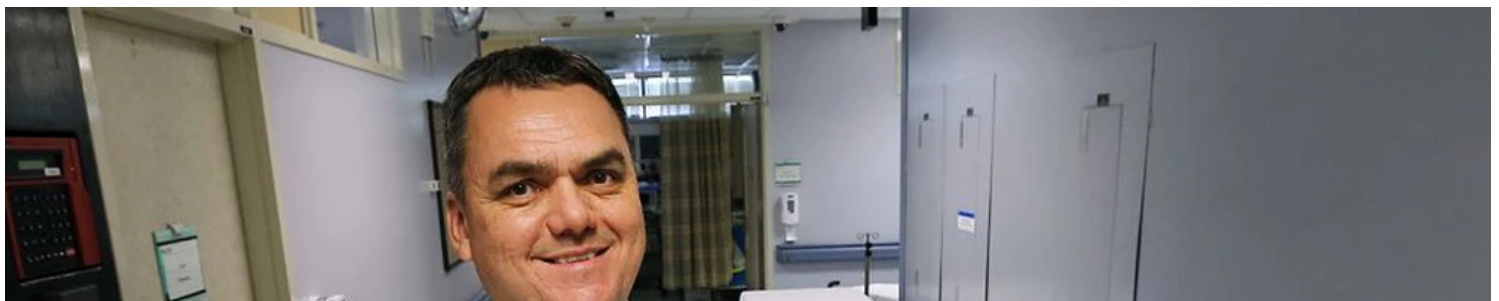
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**News**

# Patients treated sooner with addition of urgent care centre, says Windsor Regional

*Of the 131,000 visits to the hospital's emergency departments last year, about 40 per cent could have received care sooner if they went to an urgent care centre, according to estimates from Windsor Regional*

**Derek Spalding** • Windsor Star  
Jul 23, 2015 • July 23, 2015 • 3 minute read





Dr. Paul Bradford, medical director of emergency and trauma services at Windsor Regional Hospital, is shown at the Ouellette Campus on Thursday, July 23, 2015. (DAN JANISSE/The Windsor Star)

Wait times in Windsor's emergency rooms should drastically decrease, if plans are approved for a new urgent care centre, say health officials.

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The centre, which is slated for construction in Windsor's urban core, is a key component in the proposal for a new mega-hospital unveiled just last week.



The facility is anticipated to reduce emergency room volumes by treating patients with less severe health problems, such as respiratory illnesses, broken limbs, cuts and burns.

“For that group of patients its going to be very helpful and very effective,” said Dr. Paul Bradford, medical director of emergency and trauma services at Windsor Regional. “This model removes some of the less critical patients from the emergency department and places them in a more appropriate setting.”



Dr. Paul Bradford, medical director of emergency and trauma services at Windsor Regional Hospital, is shown at the Ouellette Campus on Thursday, July 23, 2015. (DAN JANISSE/The Windsor Star)

Hospital officials didn't have an exact figure for how much wait times would be reduced with a new urgent care centre, slated to be built at the old Grace Hospital site on Crawford Avenue, but the benefits could be quite extensive.

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Of the 131,000 visits to the hospital's emergency departments last year, about 40 per cent could have received care sooner if they went to an urgent care centre, according to estimates from Windsor Regional.

Typical wait times at Windsor's Metropolitan campus sat at just under four hours as of Thursday, while the Ouellette campus clocked its typical wait at more than seven hours.

More specifically, patients with uncomplicated conditions at Met waited an about 3.6 hours, compared to the 4.3 hours at Ouellette. Patients with complex conditions waited 10.3 hours at Met, compared to 11.9 hours at Ouellette.

Other regions that have adopted similar urgent care models indicate that wait times at the new facilities can be half as long as traditional emergency departments.

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Plans for the Windsor site call for a four-storey 80,000-square-foot facility that is expected to see an estimated 30,000 patients a year. It would operate much like a walk-in clinic, but with far more capabilities. Urgent care centres have a full set of diagnostics and a full compliment of hospital emergency staff and physicians.

With such a centre in operation, the new mega-hospital emergency department can then focus on more severe cases, such as cardiac arrest, head injuries and chest pains.

Having just the one large department is much more efficient, said Bradford, but it wouldn't work as well without an urgent care centre in the core. Moving the bulk of emergency services to the new site on County Road 42 would have left a void in the downtown, particularly for those who have mental health issues or those who lack transportation.

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“If we take all these resources and we put that out on Highway 42, all these people, they may be in trouble or they're all going to be calling ambulances all the time,” Bradford said. “Having something in the downtown, maintaining that presence, gives those people care.”

Urgent care centres have proven extremely successful in other communities, including the Greater Toronto Area. Bradford described how eager Windsor Regional staff were to incorporate similar models here.

“People were going past other (emergency departments) from other communities and coming to their urgent care centre because the waits were so short and they could get the tests they need,” he said.

The future of the proposed urgent care centre now sits with Ontario's ministry of health, which is reviewing the hospital's plan over the next few months. If it gets the green light, the hospital plans a widespread educational campaign to help the public understand the concept.

[dspalding@windsorstar.com](mailto:dspalding@windsorstar.com)

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