

# Mega-hospital committee eyes fall deadline

By Dave Hall, The Windsor Star

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MPP Teresa Piruzza, right, and Tom Porter during a news conference to mark the official launch of a public consultation process regarding the future of hospital services in Windsor-Essex. Photograph by: Jason Kryk, The Windsor Star

WINDSOR, Ont. — An advisory committee looking at whether Windsor needs a single-site acute care hospital has set an aggressive timetable for delivering its first report to the provincial government.

Officially launching its public consultation process Thursday, committee members said they would submit a final report to the province by November which would include a recommendation whether to move forward with Phase 2.

"Our mandate is to determine, through public and stakeholder consultation, whether or not to move to the next step," said committee co-chairwoman Teresa Piruzza, MPP for Windsor West.

"Our mandate does not include a location, potential cost, governance or administration of a new single-site acute care hospital.

"The report will also outline the concerns related to moving forward to the next step," said Piruzza.

The study resulted from a statement by Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan who said in April it was time for the Windsor-area community to consider construction of one hospital to replace Windsor Regional and Hotel-Dieu Grace.

Committee members say the study is looking only at acute-care services and not long-term and chronic care services which are offered at the Tayfour Campus of Windsor Regional.

"To call this a mega-hospital is a misnomer," said Dave Cooke, one of three co-chairs on the committee with Tom Porter and Piruzza. "It's about acute care and nothing else.

"We've simply been asked to take the temperature, if you will, on the subject," said Cooke.

"We're taking the discussion into the public realm and beyond institutional discussions to see where we're headed."

The committee has established a website - [windsorhospitalsstudy.com](http://windsorhospitalsstudy.com) - where residents can gather information about the process and submit comments.

The committee also plans public consultations, either in a public meeting format or in a series of visits to local stakeholder groups.

"We're open to consulting with any stakeholder who wants to offer comments," said Matt Marchand, president of the Windsor Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce. "It's an aggressive timeline but it's also a reasonable one given the importance of the subject matter."

Porter said the committee will also take a look at issues leading to the recent construction of hospitals in Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie.

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