

newsdurhamregion.com

# Rouge Valley Health System deserves praise for open stance

 [Print this Page](#)

March 19, 2009

At a time when Ontarians can't be blamed for looking in any and every direction they can find for information on the state of public health care, it's a relief to know the Rouge Valley Health System has nothing to hide.

That's one conclusion that can be drawn by the decision of the RVHS board to be included in the Fraser Institute's Ontario Hospital Report Card for 2009.

Sadly for Ontario taxpayers, especially those in Durham Region where Lakeridge Health Corporation decided not to take part, just 17 of Ontario's 136 acute care hospitals chose to participate in the Fraser Institute study. And that was down from the 43 that were involved in 2006.

It's important, in a public health care system funded wholly by taxpayer dollars, that an outside entity like the Fraser Institute offer an objective viewpoint on how that system is running. While internal controls and surveys are also valuable and provide a snapshot of quality control, an organization that stands at arm's length from the system can give some added insight. Not a bad thing and one would think, nothing to be afraid of.

So, one wonders, what are those 119 acute care hospitals trying to hide? Why did they choose not to take part in the Fraser Institute report?

Lakeridge spokesman Arnel Schiratti was asked that question and answered: "Lakeridge doesn't actively participate in the Fraser Report because we, like many other hospitals, have concerns with regards to the methodology used."

To its credit, the RVHS board had no such concerns and was willing to let Fraser Report co-author Nadeem Esmail, have access to its data.

Janet Harris, RVHS vice-president of quality, risk, professional practice and chief nursing executive, spoke for the hospital and the board.

"It really comes down to the board and the CEO's commitment to being open and transparent."

Perhaps that's an important point of departure between the two hospital systems which serve Durham residents. In this particular instance, at least, Lakeridge has chosen to avoid scrutiny and run with the pack that would rather avoid the prying eyes of the public, the public who pay its bills.

The Rouge Valley Health System is willing to allow taxpayers who fund its programs and procedures and who use its services the chance to see how it's doing.

Lakeridge should take part in future report cards.

---

-- *Metroland Durham Region Media Group*