

“who dares not offend, cannot be honest”

One Manitowaning Road

opinion

editorial

Patient transfer project an innovative solution

Examples of creative thinking by politicians and bureaucrats tend to be somewhat rare, for all of the lip service spouted by pols and civil servants alike in extolling the importance of ‘thinking outside the box’ in order to find innovative solutions to pressing policy issues presented by shrinking government coffers and the ongoing threat that government services might sink beneath a burgeoning swell of red ink, never to resurface.

Nonetheless, the Manitoulin Sudbury District Service Board (DSB) decision to utilize an alternate transportation method to transfer non-critical care patients between health centres does seem to be a beacon of innovation that shines through the fog of modern government service delivery models, illuminating a path down which more government bodies could be guided.

True, the use of older ambulances to provide the means to expedite the pilot project will all too likely entail higher costs than would be the case if new vehicles were to be utilized and perhaps the use of older ambulances will prove to be an inadvisable economy even in the short term, still, as a pilot project, such use will be by definition of a temporary nature. If the very likely savings to be accrued by the use

of non-paramedic monitored transportation and the better level of coverage provided by not removing emergency service personnel and equipment from their normal coverage zones to provide non-critical transportation between communities is realized, the pilot can be expanded to a fully operational service with new specifically-designed vehicles purchased for that less equipment-intensive purpose.

The approach exemplified by the Manitoulin Sudbury DSB decision to employ an alternate level of care in the transportation of patients who do not need the attendance of highly specialized human and physical resources is that kind of thinking we will need to see adopted in the provision of government services if we are to hope to see those services preserved or even expanded in the future. It is refreshing to see government agencies finding ways to better utilize the current tax dollar rather than reaching deeper into our collective pockets or stranding the vulnerable on the sidelines of social equity.

Kudos to all involved in promoting this initiative including the administrative staff of the Manitoulin Health Centre, the Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre and the DSB.