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The state of health care in Ontario

Ontario's Auditor General recently released a special report regarding Ontario's health care system. The auditor's report highlights issues with the 14 provincial Community Care Access Centres (CCAC). One of the major issues noted was the inconsistency in the level of care provided to patients across the province, due to a lack of standard care protocols. For example, individuals with the same condition, living in different parts of the province, often receive different levels of care. A standardized level of care would help ensure the same care is received, regardless of where you live. The findings of the auditor's report do not surprise me as I've heard from and advocate for many residents in Dufferin-Caledon who are unable to get services through the CW CCAC.

Another significant concern in the report includes how our health care dollars are being spent.

The combined 14 CCAC's spend $2.4-billion (representing roughly five percent of all health care spending in Ontario) with 41 percent of the CCAC budget being used for administration and less than 60 percent being used for front-line care. This is a disproportionate amount of money being spent on management and assessment, rather than actual delivery of care.

In my office I hear from Dufferin-Caledon residents who have been denied services or have had their services severely reduced, by the CW CCAC. I regularly raise the issue of service cuts and reductions with the Minister and highlight the inability of residents to access care when they need it. While the CW CCAC continues to claim it is forced to limit its caseload because of lack of funds, the CEO's salary more than doubled between 2009 and 2014 to $271,164.04. As a result of cutbacks, patients have had to make tough choices and have had to rely on help from family member or friends, or paying for additional private care. I know of several individuals who chose to move out of Dufferin-Caledon to a different part of the province where the services they needed were available through another CCAC.

Ontario's health care system continues to deteriorate due to this Liberal government's inaction in addressing these deficiencies. The state of Ontario's health care was also examined in the October 14, 2015 Health Quality Ontario's report. In that report it found that many areas of our province's health care system have not seen any improvement and with some having deteriorated in the last four to ten years. Coming to the same conclusion as the Auditor General, Health Quality Ontario indicated that the level of care a patient receives is dependent on where they live and that home-care patients struggle to find care and more often are relying on family and friends when their care needs are not being met.

Ontarians expect they will receive access to necessary services and deserve the same quality of services, regardless of where they live. Unfortunately, this government has continued to ignore the warning signs that continue to get highlighted in reports like the Auditor General's.

By Sylvia Jones, MPP