

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Government legislation further risks the state of Ontario's health care system

Last year, Ontario's Auditor General uncovered a number of issues with the Province's 14 Community Care Access Centres (CCAC), which help arrange home and community care for patients across the province.

Some of the major findings include inconsistent levels of care across the province and 41 per cent of spending by all CCACs went to administrative service rather than front line care.

After continuous pressure, the Provincial government brought forward legislation earlier this fall, Bill 41 ? the Patients First Act, 2016, in an attempt to reform our province's health care system. Unfortunately, Bill 41 does little to address the fundamental problem with the Province's CCACs and our overall health care system.

The proposed legislation would see Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), which have a mandate that includes the responsibility to plan, integrate and fund local health services, absorb CCACs to deliver home care service through 80 sub-LHINs. The Auditor General reported LHINs are failing to meet their mandate, so it is surprising that the government is rewarding them with additional responsibilities.

Even more concerning, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care's role will expand under Bill 41 to issue policy and operational directives to the LHINs and make suggestions for LHIN supervisors. The minister will also be able to issue directives to hospital boards when it is deemed to be in the ?public interest.? The government is replacing one level of bureaucracy with two, which will take away resources from patient services.

Currently, Bill 41 is reviewed by members of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly for amendments. Unfortunately, the government used their majority in the Committee Nov. 2 to drastically cut back the amount of time available for public consultations for Bill 41. This effectively limited the ability for patients and healthcare providers to have their voices heard about this important legislation that will significantly impact our Province's health care system.

I have heard concerns from a number of individuals from Dufferin-Caledon about the impact Bill 41 will have on the health care system, including that health care decisions will be made by the government rather than health care providers and funding will be taken away from hospitals and frontline care to hire administrative workers and less front line service providers.

My Progressive Conservative colleagues and I do not believe that the expansion of bureaucracy from the Ministry will improve front-line patient care. That is why we cannot support this proposed legislation that will further risk the state of our Province's health care system.

