

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Share your long-term care stories with us

After 14 years of inadequate funding for home care and long-term care, I regularly hear from residents of Dufferin-Caledon who are seeking help in either finding a bed in a long-term-care home or accessing a personal support worker.

Last week, I asked the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care about the story of a local family whose father was forced to go to London to find a long-term care placement, three hours away from his friends and family. Stories like this are far too common and many other residents tell me that the government has failed to provide the service that families and seniors deserve.

Seniors are the fastest growing demographic in Canada and Statistics Canada shows that seniors will make up 23 per cent of the population within the next 15 years. Caring for our seniors through long-term care homes is something the government should take pride in, yet wait times for long-term care in Ontario continue to grow. There are 30,000 seniors waiting for access to a long-term care bed, and the list is expected to grow to 50,000 people in the next six years. In our community, there are more than 800 people on the waitlist for long-term care beds. Also, 30,000 of the province's long-term care beds have not been rebuilt to modern standards. In November 2017, the Central West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) released statistics on the average wait time to find a placement in long-term-care facilities in Dufferin-Caledon. According to Central West LHIN, the Avalon Retirement Centre waiting list is 360 days. The Dufferin Oaks Home waiting list is 481 days. King Nursing Home has a 348-day wait. Shelburne Residence is 352 days and Vera M. Davis stands at 662 days. The consequence of the long waitlist put incredible stress on family members who are trying to find placement for their loved ones.

The Independent non-partisan Auditor General's 2015 report stated that for every dollar that is supposed to be spent on home care, 39 cents goes to administration instead of front-line services. The shortage in long-term-care creates a backlog in our hospitals as individuals who should be in a long-term care facility are forced to stay in a hospital bed until a long-term care bed becomes available. The Liberal government has failed to adequately invest in long-term care, leaving hundreds of seniors behind.

The Ontario Progressive Conservative Caucus and I know that more needs to be done to build long-term care beds and improve home care in the province of Ontario. If your family is frustrated finding care for your loved one, please contact my office at 519-941-7751 or email me at sylvia.jonesco@pc.ola.org

