

Jones called on new Minister to fix long-term care woes

By Bill Rea

Oak Ridges & Markham MPP Dr. Helena Jaczek was in her first full day as Minister of Health and Long-Term Care when she had to start fielding opposition questions.

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones was among who kept the new Minister on her feet during Question Period in the legislature last Tuesday.

Jaczek had been minister of Community and Social Services until last Monday, when Health and Long-Term Care Minister Dr. Eric Hoskins announced he was resigning his cabinet post and his seat immediately. Jaczek was appointed his successor.

Welcome to day one, Jones called out to Jaczek as she started her questioning, calling on the new Minister to address the failure to provide adequate long-term care for seniors.

The example Jones cited dealt with the family of a 93-year-old Belfountain man who have been trying to find care for him. He has been forced to travel for three hours to find a long-term care placement in London.

Something needs to be done to help the seniors of Ontario to live out the rest of their lives in dignity in a facility that is able to deal with their needs, Jones quoted the man's daughter as saying.

Why is this government failing to provide the care that Ontario seniors deserve? Jones asked the Minister, according to Hansard.

Certainly, when we hear of stories as the member of Dufferin & Caledon has related, we're obviously extremely sympathetic, Jaczek replied. We know that we need to ensure that people live out their lives in dignity and in safety.

She added the government has announced the addition of some 5,000 more long-term-care beds over the next four years.

This is something that will be tailored to individual communities through the application process, she said. The first tranche of this is coming to a conclusion very, very shortly.