

Jones calls for action on hospital bed shortage

By Bill Rea

The ordeal experienced by Jamie-Lee Ball recently at Brampton Civic Hospital has prompted Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones to call for action from the government.

Ball was taken to the hospital last month suffering from internal bleeding, according to published reports. Her mother, Lori Leckie told Jones her daughter was forced to wait on a stretcher in the hospital corridor for five days because there were no rooms.

Jones raised the matter last Thursday in Question Period in the legislature, telling Health and Long-Term Care Minister Eric Hoskins that Leckie is a constituent of hers.

Jones, according to Hansard, cited published reports that quoted Ball as saying, "I spent five days in the hospital afraid, in pain and staring at a white partition wall as I anxiously awaited answers. Lori wants you to explain why her daughter had no hospital bed for five days."

"I have to say I was distraught when I learned of this particular individual, in a very vulnerable state, and what she had to endure at one of our hospitals," Hoskins replied. "It's important that all of us who have a role to play in providing that highest-quality care remember specifically that we're dealing with individuals in an extremely vulnerable state. We need to do everything we can to ensure their safety and that they are taken care of in a compassionate way."

Hoskins also said he's "looking very carefully and specifically" to make sure something like this doesn't happen again.

"Minister, I'm sure that Lori and Jamie-Lee appreciate your sympathy, but you are the Minister of Health," Jones replied. "You have an opportunity to fix this issue. It's not new; we just heard about it in Hamilton. It's happening in Brampton. It's happening all over Ontario."

Jones added it's unacceptable for someone to be left lying in a hallway for five days.

"When will the Minister ensure that our loved ones get a bed when they need one?" Jones demanded.

Hoskins he was asked that question the previous day, at the opening of the Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness.

"It's measures like that which will draw individuals in the community to the appropriate resources and reduce the overcrowding the member opposite mentioned," he said.

"The Minister has an opportunity to address this unacceptable overcrowding," Jones maintained. "Unfortunately this is not a new issue. It is happening in Hamilton, Brampton and across Ontario. This is another unacceptable example of 'hallway medicine'.

Patients are left without a bed, privacy or action by the Minister."