

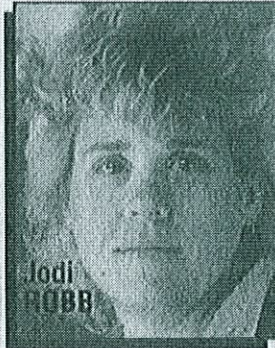
Doctors and hospitals

This past week, two of my family members had the unfortunate experience of visiting the emergency room in two of our local hospitals. I being one of them. And I say unfortunate not because of the services I received but the fact that we had to use the facilities at all.

My grandmother, who is a recent recipient of a shiny new hip joint, visited her surgeon in the Chatham hospital on Monday for a routine checkup. While things have healed nicely in the hip area the surgeon was concerned with some lingering swelling in her legs and decided an ultrasound would be best in looking for any possible problems.

Seeing as they were at the hospital for her appointment anyways, my mother and grandmother took the short walk to the emergency department for what they thought would be a quick in and out procedure. It was 12 hours later from the time they had walked into the hospital until they were finally on their way home.

Why the long wait? Did the hospital staff not think that an 87-year-old patient or the other people who



were waiting their turns were important enough to treat? That didn't appear to be the case as the staff were doing the best they could to keep up with the large crowd.

Or is it the fact that our health care system has left many people with no choice but to go to the hospital's emergency room, as there are not enough doctors or clinics to service their needs.

As my mother and grandmother sat and waited patiently for their turn, they said it was inevitable but to strike up a conversation with those around them. One woman, who had severely injured herself in a fall, had her jaw wired together, but because she didn't have a family physician she has to use the hospital's emergency room for medical follow-up care and for blood work.

Rest assured this woman was not the only person in this situation.

The hospital's emergency room and the staff within were, as my mother put it, "literally run off their feet trying to accommodate everyone."

During my trip to the emergency room I chose to go to Newbury. I can honestly say I visited triage and was in with a doctor within 15 minutes. While this may not always be the case at the hospital, I don't

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think that I have ever waited more than an hour at this rural facility.

The medical staff were all exceptionally wonderful in my treatment, knowledgeable and efficient.

Newbury's hospital, much like the facility in Wallaceburg is now facing, has been under the microscope of the powers that be, which try and justify the smaller rural hospital's existence.

Yet these same people seem to think by closing either of these hospitals would not affect the wait times at the larger facilities.

Maybe instead of sitting in a smaller hospital and studying the numbers that use the emergency facilities, physiotherapy or the numerous other programs that they provide their patients, maybe they should sit in the larger facility, which is already overburdened for 12 hours before they can speak to anyone.

Better yet, maybe they should speak to the doctors, nurses and other medical professionals to see what improvements could be made to the medical system to optimize our care.

As one doctor said to me: "It is like the generals are sending us to the front lines of a war to fight but not giving us any ammunition."

Leaders Spirit
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