

Injured cyclist still seeking answers

By **LISA TALLYN**
Staff Writer

A Georgetown woman recovering from surgery for a serious shoulder injury she suffered last month while cycling on Wildwood Rd. continues to press for answers as to why she wasn't sent to a trauma centre immediately after the accident.

Christine Ford, a jewelry and fabric artist, said she suffered a "high trauma fracture" to her shoulder when she fell from her bicycle June 10 and she was taken to Georgetown Hospital by ambulance in excruciating pain. She was told by a doctor there that she needed surgery immediately and that the pain would only get worse. After a three-hour wait she was told the hospital had done all it could and hadn't been able to arrange the surgery elsewhere but nothing else could be done there. At one point, Ford's sister, Barbara Ford-Pimento, who was with her at the hospital, said they were told by a doctor to 'read between the lines'...that there was nothing they could do, but if they took Ford to Brampton or Oakville they would be obligated to help her.

As they left Georgetown Hospital they were told by Georgetown staff Ford had an appointment at the Brampton Hospital Fracture Clinic the following Thursday (six days later).

Ford-Pimento didn't feel they could wait that long because her sister was in so much pain so she drove her to Oakville-Trafalgar Hospital where a doctor told them there was no one able to handle a "break that bad" and they would have to go to Brampton Civic, where they waited four hours to be told nothing could be done before the fracture clinic appointment June 16.

Despite the medication she was taking, the pain was so bad her family took her back to Georgetown Hospital the following Sunday where she was given more pain medication and her fracture clinic appointment was moved up to Tuesday.

Ford was originally going to have to wait until June 27 for surgery but fortunately her surgeon was able to get it moved up to June 23.

She said her shoulder was broken in seven pieces and the surgeon put a screw and plate in it. Her bicep muscle was also damaged. Surgery went well but she said it's a "wait and see" situation to see how her shoulder will fare. As expected, she's still in significant pain, but says it's lessening. She's facing a year of physiotherapy and plans to be an "A student of physio."

She has no complaints about her surgery, "the issue was getting in the system."

She doesn't want a similar thing to happen to anyone else.

"I should have been (classified) urgent," said Ford. "I strongly disagreed with it as a scheduled surgery—it should have been urgent. I don't think anyone broke the rules, I just disagreed."

"Given the seriousness of the situation she should have been originally sent to Sunnybrook Hospital, which is a trauma hospital and has the ability to cope with this complex a situation," said Ford-Pimento.

Ford said she also injured her leg in the accident.

"In any of the ERs no one seemed to pay any attention to it," said Ford. "They don't seem to be getting people where they're supposed to go. I don't care how fast it is (the ER wait time), I wasn't getting treated."

She's met with Cindy McDonell, COO of Georgetown Hospital, and Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott and will be meeting with McDonell

again in a couple of weeks.

Due to patient confidentiality McDonell would not comment specifically on Ford's case but said the investigation is not yet complete.

She said Georgetown Hospital investigates all concerns brought forward and considers the investigations "opportunities for growth."

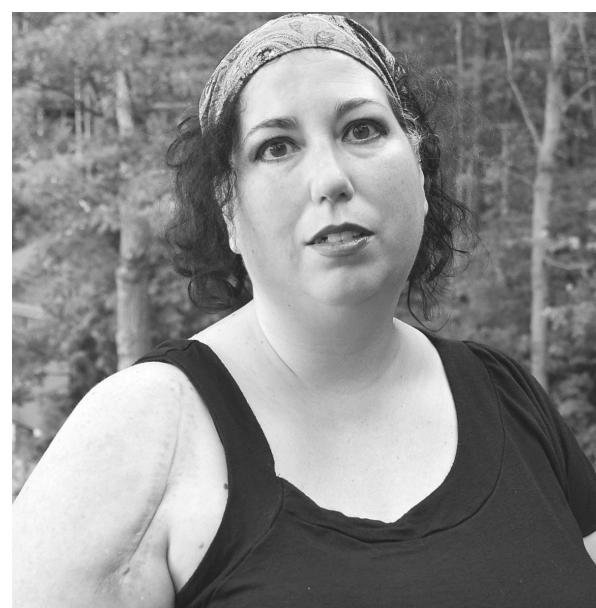
"We consider it a real opportunity to learn," she said.

McDonell said during the investigation the hospital interviews patients, family members, those who provided care while she was at the hospital, reviews charts then shares with the family any areas for improvement.


She said such investigations provide the opportunity for the hospital to learn "what's important to patients, what we're doing well, not well and any opportunities for improvement."

The hospital receives both complaints and compliments each year, said McDonell.

They track the complaints to see if there are any trends or themes and report them as part of the hospital's annual quality report.



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