

Residents concerned hospital officials 'have already made up their minds'

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Area residents at the meeting were disheartened by the board's response.

"Our impression was that there was a closed mind," said Eric Willms of Georgetown. "They made their minds up ahead of time. Their answer is no."

Former Halton Hills Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson had a similar impression.



ANDREA VanDeVALK

"I'm surprised by the lack of openness of the board. I'm not used to a system that doesn't listen," she said.

"It seemed like closed ears and nobody was particularly interested in listening," said Bill Shuttleworth of Georgetown. "I would hope this is not the end of it."

Before the meeting began several residents spoke out about the impending closure.

"There's such an overload in Peel already," said Andrea VanDeVALK of Rockwood who is also a Georgetown hospital volunteer. "If they want quality care why don't they have some of the young moms from Brampton have their babies in Georgetown?"

Liz Fogal, 20, of Georgetown, carried a sign that read Our Babies Count.

"I'm a product of that hospital and I thought that one day I might want to make my own product at that hospital."

Henry Burnett, of Ballinafad, said, "We don't want this (the closure) to be the tip of the iceberg where they close the entire hospital."

After the presentation, both Bonnette and Fogal stressed that the fight to save obstetrics and pediatrics at Georgetown wasn't over.

"We're going to step it up and go to another level," said Bonnette, who added he "was really proud of all the residents who came out."

While he didn't seem overjoyed with the outcome of the meeting, he said, "at least I got out of them in the end that they are going to discuss it."

"For us this is just the beginning," said Fogal. "We'll be going to Queen's Park for sure. This is not over."

No comment was available from the Ministry of Health or Health Minister George Smitherman despite repeated calls from *The Independent & Free Press* during the past week.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

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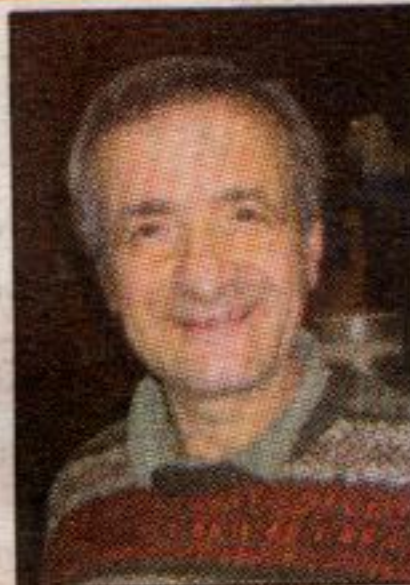
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