

Jaczek is Minister of Community of Social Services

By Mark Pavilons

King residents now have a cabinet minister on their side.

Dr. Helena Jaczek, MPP for Oak Ridges-Markham, was named Minister of Community and Social Services in Premier Kathleen Wynne's new cabinet.

Jaczek was delighted at the appointment, albeit a bit shocked.

"I am honoured that the premier has appointed me as the



Minister of Community and Social Services and I am proud to be part of a government that has made a commitment to building communities up by protecting the most vulnerable individuals and families. I am delighted to continue working to secure a brighter future for many Ontarians across the province," she said.

"I'm always happy to serve in whatever capacity."

Her ministry is the third largest, in terms of both responsibility and budget. It commands an annual budget of \$10.7 billion.

The major ministry responsibilities are Social Assistance, Community and Developmental Services and The Family Responsibility Office.

In an unusual move, the premier decided that existing ministry staff stay put and not move with their minister. This will help ease the transition for new cabinet ministers.

Jaczek said she already went through days of intense briefing by staff who were very frank and thorough. She said she's "very impressed with the professionalism" of civil servants in her ministry.

York will be well served by four ministers this term - herself, Steven Del Duca (Vaughan, Minister of Transportation), Reza Moridi (Richmond Hill, Minister of Training Colleges and Universities, Minister of Research and Innovation) and Michael Chan (Markham-Unionville, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade).

Her new role will keep her quite busy at Queen's Park and beyond, but she said she'll do her best to stay in touch with her riding constituents.

Dr. Jaczek was first elected as MPP in October 2007 and subsequently re-elected in 2011 and 2014 to serve the residents of Oak Ridges-Markham.

Previously, Dr. Jaczek served as the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health & Long Term Care, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of the Environment, and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health Promotion. In 2011, she was elected chair of the Government Caucus and held the position until 2014.

She has also served on the Standing Committee on Social Policy; as vice-chair of the Standing Committee on General Government; the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, and the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

Prior to entering politics, Dr. Jaczek served as the medical officer of health and commissioner of health services for York Region. During her 18 years in this position, she was responsible public health, land ambulance and long-term care for over one million residents.

After coming to Canada from England as a 12-year-old, Jaczek later received her medical degree and Master of Health Sciences from the University of Toronto and a Master of Business Administration from the Schulich School of Business at York University. After many years in general practice on staff at Women's College Hospital in Toronto, Dr. Jaczek became York's medical officer of health.

She has been actively involved with numerous community organizations, including the Ontario Great Lakes Renewal Foundation, York Centre for Children, Youth and Families, York Region District Health Council, Giant Steps Toronto and Newmarket Stingrays

Swim Club. She has volunteered with the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council and mentored foreign-trained professionals.

Dr. Jaczek lives in York Region with her partner, Hershel. She is the mother of two adult children, Natasha and Nicholas.