

Marland 'overwhelmed'

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For Margaret Marland, it has been, "the most heart-ening and humbling time of my life."

Marland said yesterday she has been overwhelmed by the outpouring of warmth and affection she has received since she suffered a mild heart attack Feb. 5, following by a quadruple bypass on her birthday 10 days later.

"I can't tell you how great people have been," Marland said in her first interview since the surgery at Toronto General Hospital.

"I've always sent a lot of cards to people, but until I got all the cards, calls, letters and flowers, I never realized how much it means," the Minister Responsible for

Children's Services told *The News*.

"It's just been overwhelming. It's a miracle I got to the hospital, and everything since then has been icing, really."

Marland was reading *The Mississauga News* at home when she noticed her fingertips were bluish. Thinking they were smudged from newspaper ink, Marland washed her hands, but they didn't come clean.

"When I folded them back into my hand, they felt cold," the 14-year Mississauga South MPP said.

"I thought about whether I should take a couple of Advil and go to bed or whether I should go to (the emergency department) and take their time up to tell me I was fine," said the Lorne Park resident.

"Then I decided that I owed it to my seven grandchildren to have it checked out."

by support

That decision may have saved her life.

Doctors at Trillium Health Centre examined Marland, gave her an electro-cardiogram and, to her surprise, informed her she had suffered a mild heart attack.

"They told me, 'your blockages are so severe, we can't let you go'."

Her symptoms, more or less a dull ache above the waist, were not what Marland had imagined would accompany a heart attack. She was subsequently transferred downtown and underwent the operation that restored full circulation to her heart, which had a blockage of about 90 per cent of blood flow.

While she will be limiting her schedule when she returns to work, one thing Marland will find time for is

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MARLAND

MPP recovering after operation

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volunteering to speak to Heart and Stroke groups about her experience.

The care she received at both hospitals was top notch, says Marland. Even the new quick-discharge policy was a blessing because she was so much more comfortable at home.

The MPP has been slowly recovering, taking some walks around the block at first with her son Robert, a former Olympic gold-medal rower, and walking in malls outside of Mississauga.

"I feel 100 per cent better every day," says Marland, who plans to attend a Cabinet meeting for an hour this week. "It's just straight in and straight out — don't tell my doctor," she laughed.

Asked if she's still a candidate in the provincial election expected later this year, Marland replied, "absolutely. That's not in question."

A longtime workaholic as a school board trustee, councillor and MPP, Marland vows there'll be some changes made — to her hours, her exercise regime, her diet and her attitude.

"It's not necessary to go at things 16 hours a day," she said, exhibiting her new approach. "You can get caught up in so much stuff."

Her doctor has already warned Marland that, once she has fully recovered, her fully functioning heart will leave her bursting with energy.

"I said that's great," Marland said. "It will be right in time for the campaign."