



Leah Dyck

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Hello again,

Here's the story of a woman I've known for a very long time, but it was only in the last couple of years that I've really started asking her about her health and trying to understand how her life has changed so drastically in such a short period of time. She's 59 - the same age as my own mom, and now her quality of life is awful and it's because Ontario Disability (ODSP) couldn't waste \$11 on her.

Let me explain...

Firstly, this woman has worked as a cleaner at a hospital, and then she worked in shipping and receiving, and her last job was at a nearby print shop, which lasted nine years. During her print shop tenure, she had two separate falls (years apart) while walking her dog, after work hours, sometime during the winter - both falls happened on ice. She was in her 40's. The first fall resulted in a back fracture and the second fall broke her ankle.

For some reason, no doctor thought her bone density should be tested after either fall. We'll get back to this later.

At the age of 50, she quit her printing job because everyday she was experiencing pain in her bones and joints throughout her entire body. She was forced to go on Ontario Works (welfare). After some testing, her family doctor diagnosed her with arthritis and fibromyalgia. Her doctor said this was likely the result of extensive, physical labour she endured as a cleaner, and shipping and receiving labourer for many years. She was prescribed anti-inflammatories to manage the pain, but developed ulcers and had to stop taking the medication. Her doctor told her she couldn't go back to work again due to her severe arthritis. This diagnosis allowed her to apply for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) in 2019, but within two months of submitting her application, it was denied.

She contacted a community lawyer who helps people like her who are clearly disabled and still get their applications denied... yes, this happens so regularly, there are community lawyers dedicated to ODSP appeals. This lawyer appealed their decision to decline her application... and then Covid hit.

Then she had another fall. This time it was in her kitchen and it resulted in a Tibial Plateau Fracture, which is a break of the larger lower leg bone below the knee that breaks into the knee joint itself. Now she lives with a plate and pins in her leg. At the time of the fall, she had to be in a wheelchair for three months, and eventually had a walker and leg brace, which wasn't covered by O.W.

After a total of three years of waiting, ODSP scheduled a video court appearance with her, in which she had to do in her bed with a leg brace on - yes, that's how long it was taking her to heal! I know this is true because this is what made me start asking her questions... I was constantly wondering why she was so young and in a wheelchair/walker/leg brace all the time. The day after her video court appearance, she was approved for ODSP benefits.

Then on Feb. 18, 2022, she had another fall. She was walking to the bus shelter after leaving a medical appointment and slipped on ice. ODSP only covers cab rides that are \$15 or more. But because hers was only \$11, they wouldn't cover it.

After this fall, her doctor finally got the brilliant idea of testing her bone density. She was then diagnosed with Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI), an inherited genetic bone disorder, also known as brittle bone disease.

This woman's ODSP support payments are \$850/month. She has been living in severe poverty for the last 10 years and will continue to live in severe poverty for the rest of her life, constantly at risk of breaking bones. After all this, she still lives at the same address, and her doctor's appointments are still only less than \$15 away and every winter she will risk falling on ice because ODSP refuses to cover transportation costs to medical appointments.

What is wrong with these people?! How can the people in charge be so sadistic?!

This woman will be receiving a meal box through [Fresh Food Weekly](#) every month for as long as I'm in charge. If you would like to sponsor her with a meal box, or anyone else like her with a meal box, it only costs \$45. Please send me a PM for details on how to do this... or to help this woman in any other way.

Thank you for taking the time to read her story.

Leah

