

Ontario Health Coalition

15 Gervais Drive, Suite 305, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1Y8

tel: 416-441-2502 email: ohc@sympatico.ca www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca

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Attn: Assignment Editor

More than 56,000 Ontarians vote to stop the dismantling of community hospitals in volunteer-led referendum: Health Coalition

Ontarians “passionate” about stopping the contracting out of their local public hospital services to private clinics

Toronto – Over the last two and a half weeks, hundreds of volunteers with the Ontario Health Coalition have opened public voting stations to collect opinions about the government’s plan to cut services from local community hospitals and contract them out to high-volume private clinics. Ontario residents were invited to vote for one of the following statements:

- I support our local public hospitals. I do not want the government to cut our services or contract them out to private clinics.
- I support cutting services from our local public hospitals and contracting them out to private clinics.

On Saturday, April 5, more than 100 voting stations were staffed by volunteers in stores and local businesses in towns and cities across Ontario. Ballot boxes were taken to churches and faith institutions, legions, and service clubs. In the two weeks leading into the street votes on April 5, more than 200 workplace votes were held in auto plants, manufacturing companies, hospitals, pharmacies, schools and many more. Over the last month, thousands of volunteers have taken leaflets door-to-door in towns and cities in every region of Ontario.

Results of the Volunteer-led “Referendum”

- 56,005 votes were cast in total.
- 55,767 voted in favour of supporting local public hospitals and stopping the private clinics.
- 107 voted for private clinics.
- 131 spoiled ballots.
- More than 400,000 leaflets on the issue were distributed door-to-door and at mall tables, farmers’ markets and in workplaces across Ontario over the last four weeks.
- More than 200 workplace votes were held.
- More than 100 voting stations were open from Thunder Bay to Windsor to Peterborough and in between for the street votes on Saturday.

“I don’t see how the government can ignore more than 56,000 Ontarians who in two short weeks voted to stop the private clinics,” said Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition. “We tried to create a democratic forum so that people could choose whether or not they wanted private clinics and have their say. We were overwhelmed by the response. People have been emailing and calling us all weekend demanding to have a chance to vote to protect their local hospitals. Almost no one is in favour of private clinics.”

“We went to the mall and every day we got hundreds of votes,” said Felicia Fahey, co-chair of the Sudbury Health Coalition. “Of 800 votes at this one voting station, only two voted for private clinics. People couldn’t vote fast enough to save our local public hospitals. This is an issue that everyone is passionate about.”

“I went to a private clinic and they tried to charge me money for services,” said Trish McAuliffe, co-chair of the Durham Health Coalition. “The government’s plan to cut our local public hospital services and contract them out to private clinics is a threat to single-tier public health care. People are deeply opposed about the government’s plans.”

Background

After learning that the Ontario government plans to cut local public hospital services and contract them out to private clinics, the Ontario Health Coalition met with government officials to raise serious concerns about private clinics charging user fees to patients, quality & safety issues, inappropriate billings, poor governance structures, worsening of staffing shortages in hospitals, destabilization of hospital budgets and the impact on patients who will have to travel further to high-volume centres for services. The government would not stop the private clinics plan, though it has an easy solution of setting up such clinics under the public governance of local hospitals. So the Ontario Health Coalition working with thousands of volunteers has organized a volunteer-led cross-province referendum.

Since mid-March, concerned individuals have distributed leaflets door-to-door, in local community agencies, in businesses and churches and temples. Over the last two-weeks, advance polls have been held in workplaces, businesses, schools and universities. Voting stations in local businesses were open on Saturday in cities across Ontario.

Regional Results

Votes were received from all across Ontario. Vote tallies for specific towns are as follows:

- Chatham Kent – 735 for public hospitals
- Durham – more than 1,100 for public hospitals.
- Guelph – 865 for public hospitals; 2 for private clinics; 2 spoiled ballots
- Hamilton – 1,437 for public hospitals, 2 spoiled ballots
- Kitchener-Waterloo – 2,968 for public hospitals; 5 for private clinics
- London – 8,164 for public hospitals; 16 for private clinics; 64 spoiled ballots
- Niagara – 2,039 for public hospitals
- Ottawa – 1,829 for public hospitals; 4 for private clinics
- Peterborough – 4,596 for public hospitals; 2 for private clinics; 3 spoiled ballots
- Sarnia – more than 1,500 for public hospitals
- St. Marys – more than 450 for public hospitals
- Sudbury – 5,157 for public hospitals; 13 for private clinics; 11 spoiled ballots
- Thunder Bay – 1,890 for public hospitals
- Windsor – 11,511 for public hospitals; 55 for private clinics; 29 spoiled ballots

These results are in addition to thousands of votes from all over Ontario including the following communities:

GTA	Hampton	Cargill	Mindon	Tiny	Ingersoll
Ajax	Grafton	Chesley	Mitchell	Whitby	Inniskillin
Aurora	Kendal	Cobourg	Mount Forest	Whitney	Kitchener-
Brampton	Lakefield	Coboconk	Mount Hope	Warton	Waterloo
Etobicoke	Orono	Collingwood	Omeme	Wilberforce	Leamington
Maple	Roseneath	Cranbrook	Orangeville	Woolwich	Listowel
Markham	Trenton	Eden Mills	Orillia	Guelph	London
Mississauga	Picton	Ethel	Oro-Medonte		New
Newmarket		Fergus	Oshawa	Southwest	Hamburg
Oshawa		Fordwick	Owen Sound	Amherstburg	Oldcastle
Pickering	Central &	Gadshill	Palmerston	Beachville	Port Lambton
Scarborough	Central West	Goderich	Penatenguish	Belle River	Port Stanley
Toronto	Ontario	Halliburton	ene	Blenheim	Ridgetown
Vaughan	Ajax	Harriston	Phelpston	Brigden	Sarnia
Whitby	Arthur	Huntsville	Pickering	Brightsgrove	Strathroy
	Ashburne	Janetville	Port Hope	Brussels	St. Marys
Central East	Beaverton	Kawartha	Port Perry	Camlachie	Stratford
Baltimore	Barrie	Lakes	Princeville	Chatham	Seaforth
Baileyboro	Bayfield	Kincardine	Reaboro	Corunna	Tecumseh
Bewdley	Blackstock	Kippen	Rockwood	Courtright	Thamesville
Campbellford	Burk's Falls	Kirkfield	Scarborough	Dresden	Theford
Carrying Place	Bracebridge	Lindsay	Selwyn	Egmondville	Tilbury
Erinsville	Bruce Mills	Midland	Shelburne	Elmira	Tilsonburg
Fraserville	Caledonia	Millbank	South Bruce	Harrow	Vittoria

Wallaceburg
Watford
West Lorne
Windsor
Woodstock

Hamilton
Niagara-on-
the-Lake
Niagara Falls
Paris
Port Colborne
Oakville
St. Catharines
Smithville
Virgil
Welland

East

Alexandria
Almonte
Athens

Brockville
Belleville
Carleton Place
Cornwall
Elgin
Hawkesbury
Inverary
Kemptville
Lanark
Lancaster
Madoc
Manotick
Martintown
Parham
Perth
Portland

Prescott
Pembroke
Smiths Falls
Tamworth

North

Balmertown
Blind River
Cache Bay
Chelmsford
Crystal Falls
Dowling
Dryden
Garson
Gorham
Hayleybury

Hilton Beach
Hornepayne
Iroquois Falls
Kenora
Levack
Lively
Madsen
Mattawa
Nakina
Nipigon
North Bay
Onaping
Richard's
Landing
Red Lake
St. Charles

Sault Ste.
Marie
Sioux Lookout
Sturgeon Falls
Sudbury
Swastika
Terrace Bay
Thessalon
Thornton
Thunder Bay
Timmins
Val Caron

For more information please call Natalie Mehra 416-441-2502 (office); français Sue Hotte 905-932-1646.

