

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
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Government Guilty of Rank Hypocrisy Charges Health Watchdog

Toronto - Referring to Bill 46 currently before the legislature, the Ontario Health Coalition accused the government of blatant hypocrisy in its latest attack on public healthcare. In a report released today, the coalition used recent data collected across the province to expose the results of the radical shift in homecare policy direction pursued by the Harris Conservatives. The report, titled "Secrets in the House", details startling levels of secrecy and incompetence in healthcare reform. The report's findings are based on two years of community forums and research. The coalition charges that the government's reform can be characterized by seven key traits:

- unprecedented lack of democracy and consultation
- shocking lack of accountability
- complete lack of standards and questionable quality control
- chronic and planned underfunding
- burgeoning waiting lists and total lack of assessment of population need
- severe staffing shortages
- ballooning administrative costs through duplication, waste and profit-taking

"Thousands of elderly, ill and disabled Ontarians are under threat of new cuts in the name of public accountability but there doesn't seem to be any control over the growth of profit-seeking in the health system," charged Irene Harris, coalition co chair. "After poor reform compounded by even poorer reform, the Harris Conservatives have the audacity to write a health cuts Bill titled the "Public Sector Accountability Act". Real accountability is not about handing control of all public services over to the Minister of Finance. Accountability is about meaningful democratic input, public access to information, honest disclosure - things this government refuses to do in the homecare system."

The report uncovers a litany of poor reforms and undemocratic processes including:

- deliberate exclusion of the sector from provincial access to information legislation
- increasing bankruptcies and closure of non-profits with decades history of service provision
- thousands of patients' homecare in jeopardy
- millions given to private companies in profit

Copies of the report are available at docs/secret.htm

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 416-441-2502