

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
RELEASE

30 March 1999

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Organizations announce public release of government's draft policies for Home Care

TORONTO - The Ontario Health Coalition, the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations are today publicly releasing the government's draft policies for long term care. **They point to planned underfunding, severe rationing of Home Care services for the public, and downloading of care and costs to individuals.**

The policies contained in the document "Service Directions for CCAC's and other LTC Community Agencies", published by the Long Term Care Division of the Ministry of Health, are in their fourth draft and have been discussed and circulated for more than a year to a hand-picked group of people.

The three organizations are demanding full and open public consultation on the proposed policies.

"It is not only the lack of consultation over the particulars of this document we object to, but also the secrecy and closed-door process of the past four years, during which time the Harris government has introduced profound changes to this sector," said Dan Benedict, OHC Co-Chair.

Government health restructuring has produced an unprecedented reliance on the Home and Community Care sectors. "The Tories hospital cuts and closures and cuts to lengths of hospital stay are forcing many more people to rely on Home Care, removing them from a sector in which their costs are covered under the Canada Health Act. At the same time, the government has continued to assure the Ontario public that services would be there for them. It now appears that it has no intention of ever adequately funding in-home services," said Irene Harris, Executive Vice-President, OFL.

"The government has proceeded with funding decisions, and issued guidelines which in effect dramatically reshape the Home and Community Care sectors, all without benefit of public dialogue or legislative debate," said Ethel Meade of Care Watch Toronto.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: 416-441-2502