

# Ontario Health Coalition

## LETTERS

March 9, 2001

Hon. Tony Clement, M.P.P.  
Minister of Health  
10th floor, Hepburn Block  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

By fax: (416) 326-1571

Dear Minister Clement;

We are writing to draw your attention to the attached letter which was sent to your predecessor in January. As we did not received a reply from Minister Witmer, we would like to redirect our request for a meeting and the follow up information outlined in the letter to you in your position as the new Minister of Health.

Sincerely,

Irene Harris,  
Co-chair  
Ontario Health Coalition

Daniel Benedict,  
Co-chair  
Ontario Health Coalition

January 18, 2001

From: Ontario Health Coalition

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To: Hon. Elizabeth Witmer, M.P.P.  
Minister of Health  
Hepburn Block

80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

By fax: (416) 326-1571

Dear Minister Witmer;

In light of the Critical Care Bypass situations faced by emergency rooms in Toronto in the past few weeks and the ongoing emergency room crisis across the province, the Ontario Health Coalition noted with interest your comments on the release of the jury recommendations in the Coroner Inquest into the death of Joshua Fleuelling. You indicated that [the ministry] will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that our health system meets the needs of each and every Ontario family.

As you know, many of the jury recommendations deal with the issue of emergency room overcrowding. This is not the first time a Coroner's Inquest has dealt with the crisis facing our emergency rooms. We would like to remind you of the 21 recommendations from the Coroner Inquest into the death of Kyle Martyn in 1998, including the recommendations relating to the underfunding of health care by your government.

Many of the recommendations of the jury in the Fleuelling Inquest mirror those of the Martyn jury. They are far-reaching and deal with many parts of the health care system. We support the framework provided by the jury in its set of beliefs which describe what would constitute an effective publicly funded health care system.

The Ontario Health Coalition wants to ensure that your government moves swiftly to implement the following changes recommended by the jury, so situations leading to deaths similar to the deaths of Kyle Martyn and Joshua Fleuelling need never happen again. We also take this opportunity to reiterate our urgent request for a meeting with you to review our concerns. We ask you to provide us with detailed information as to how the ministry intends to implement the following jury recommendations, and we request time lines and status updates on a quarterly basis.

**Recommendation #34:**

Re. immediate implementation of a moratorium on hospital bed closures (all types of hospital beds, such as acute, mental health, rehabilitation and complex continuing care) until the hospital system is properly sized to accommodate existing and anticipated patient care needs and new long term care beds are fully operational.

**Recommendation #35:**

Re. provision of adequate funding to maintain the aforementioned beds and complementary services by December 2000.

**Recommendation #37 (a):**

Re. increasing the number of nurses by providing adequate funding for proper compensation and benefits, and the creation of more full-time positions.

**Recommendation #37 (e):**

Re. reinstatement of the requirement that long term care facilities have at least one RN on site 24 hours a day, and the requirement that each resident be provided with 2.25 hours of care per day.

**Recommendation #37 (h):**

Re. provision by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care of the remaining \$224 million dollars of the recommended [and repeatedly promised] \$375 million dollars to create additional permanent front line nursing positions as per the January 1999 Nursing Task Force recommendations.

**Recommendation #37 (j):**

Re. home care expansion in order to relieve Emergency Department pressure and revert [sic] the implementation of managed competition.

**Recommendation #37 (k):**

Re. development of a comprehensive recruitment and retention action plan by December 30, 2000.

We share the jury's hope that these recommendations be implemented and remembered as Joshua Fleuelling's legacy to the people of Ontario.

Yours Very Truly,

Irene Harris, Co-chair Ontario Health Coalition	Daniel Benedict, Co-chair Ontario Health Coalition
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Open Letter for distribution to Ontario media.

cc. Coroner's Office for distribution to jury:

Deborah Hems,  
Carole Smith,  
Paul Kennington,  
Russell Kryklywy,  
Lorraine Radhay,  
Frances Lankin,  
Lynn McLeod,

affiliated and allied organizations