

Ontario Health Coalition

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Attn: Assignment Editor

\$3.3 Billion in Hospital Projects Privatized By McGuinty Government: Health Coalition Releases “Truth Serum” Report and Action Plan

Toronto - In one of the biggest transfers of public services to long term privatization in the history of Ontario, McGuinty's government has announced 5 privatized P3 hospitals over the last week, the Ontario Health Coalition revealed at a Queen's Park press conference this morning. The total known cost of McGuinty's privatized P3 hospital program now stands at \$3.3 billion.

In the press conference, the coalition released a “Truth Serum” report. Among the major findings:

- 1) Ironically, despite holding media events that looked like funding announcements, Premier McGuinty and Liberal MPPs fanned out across Ontario over the last week to announce that the government will *not* fund hospital projects in Belleville, Sault Ste. Marie, Mississauga, Ottawa's Montfort hospital, and North Bay. Instead for-profit companies will fund them and the communities will pay the consequences of the privatization deals that ensue. According to the government's ReNew infrastructure report some hospital projects in Ontario *will* receive public funding for their redevelopment plans, but these communities will not.
- 2) Despite government claims that these are not privatized P3 hospitals, a look at the accepted definitions of P3s in industry and academic literature shows that they are, in fact, privatized P3 hospitals.
- 3) Government claims that these projects will save money are based on the misuse of a single study. The Truth Serum report details how the study is being misquoted. In fact, the overwhelming global evidence is that they will cost more and reduce money available for clinical budgets - staff and patient services.
- 4) The government continues to promise that these projects will be transparent, in the public interest and demonstrate value for money. Still, most of the important information about the P3 policy and the projects announced remain hidden from public scrutiny. The commitment of over \$3.3 billion in formerly public assets to these privatization schemes has been undertaken with no normal parliamentary process, no public hearings, and no legislation.

“Dalton McGuinty has now committed \$3.3 billion worth of hospital assets and services to privatization schemes that he ran explicitly against in the election,” noted Dora Jeffries, coalition co chair. “None of the government's excuses for this policy withstand scrutiny. We have been misled every step of the way. It is time for McGuinty to live up to his promise and bring these projects back into the public system.”

“The Ontario Health Coalition will hold plebiscites to levy political pressure in each community under threat of hospital privatization through P3s”, said Natalie Mehra, coalition coordinator. “We conducted the first plebiscite in St. Catharines early this summer in which over 12,000 people voted against the privatization of the new hospital. We will announce another four plebiscites imminently, and more plebiscites and actions will follow those until we stop the privatization of our hospitals.”

For more information 416-230-6402.