

Ontario Health Coalition

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

Phone (416) 441-2502 Fax (416) 441-4073 email ohc@sympatico.ca

For Immediate Release – March 27, 2006

Ontario Health Coalition

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

Hamilton joins more than 50,000 Ontarians in saying no to privatized P3 hospitals

Hamilton – Hamilton voters cast close to 28,000 votes on Saturday in favour of keeping their hospitals 100 per cent publicly funded, financed, owned, administered and operated. More than 30,000 votes have already been cast in citizen-initiated plebiscites in St. Catharines, Woodstock and North Bay.

Vote totals:

27,995 In favour of ensuring the new hospital developments will be 100% public

664 Against

28,659 Total Vote

97.7% in favour

“More than 28,000 Hamilton residents cared enough about this issue to get out and vote in this voluntary referendum,” said Hamilton Health Coalition co-chair Lois Boggs. “Hundreds of volunteers staffed polling stations all over the community to give residents an opportunity to have a say. People thanked us for doing this and expressed their deep concern about the privatization of hospital buildings and services.”

“Our vote has given people an opportunity to send a strong message to our politicians that the health system is ours and we expect them to operate it in our interests, not in the interest of profit-seeking businesses,” she added. “The results in this voluntary vote are much bigger than any petition in recent memory. The McGuinty government and local Liberal MPPs ignore this significant opposition to the P3 hospitals at their own peril.”

“The international evidence is that these hospitals will cost more than publicly financed hospitals. The high costs will take money away from clinical budgets and beds,” said Dr. Ted Haines, the local coalition’s other co-chair. “The privatized P3 hospital policy has serious implications for our future health care system. We are asking the Premier to stop this privatization strategy. Dalton McGuinty must build our hospitals publicly and run their services on a non-profit basis.”

“We now have an astounding 50,000 votes against P3 privatization of our hospitals from four communities across Ontario,” said Natalie Mehra, Director of the Ontario Health Coalition. “We are gearing up for the next several community-wide votes very soon. We will continue city-by-city to make sure that Ontarians know McGuinty plans to break his election promise to stop the P3 privatization of our hospitals.”

The Vote in Context:

Health Coalition plebiscites are voluntary community-wide votes run by volunteers. The results have been extremely large in every community. The credibility of the vote is rigorously protected, vote counts are scrutineered and records carefully maintained. Every voter was asked to sign a pledge to vote only once and was asked to register with their name and address.

The plebiscite in Hamilton garnered enough votes to be of significant concern to local elected officials. The plebiscite totaled approx. 29,000 votes. In the last provincial election, the winning Hamilton MPPs got between 15,000 and 24,000 votes each (Liberal MPP Marie Bountrogianni was elected by 23,524 votes in the last election).

For more information: Hamilton – Lois Boggs: 905-317-6678,
Ontario – Natalie Mehra: 416-230-6402