

Attn: Assignment Editor
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

300 Nurses Ask McGuinty to Stop P3 Hospitals: Joint Letter

Toronto - More than 300 nurses across Ontario have written a joint letter to Premier Dalton McGuinty asking him to stop the privatization of Ontario's hospitals. In their letter, the nurses told McGuinty: "We are writing to express our strong opposition to your government's policy of hospital financing through "P3s" or public-private partnerships. 'Alternative Finance Mechanism' or 'Alternative Financing and Procurement' (AFM/AFP) hospitals are P3s under a new name." Letter signatories include Linda Haslam-Stroud, President, Vicki McKenna, First Vice President and Lesley Bell, CEO of the Ontario Nurses' Association; Mary Ferguson-Paré, President, Joan Lesmond, Immediate Past-President, and Doris Grinspun, Executive Director, of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario.

"Ontario is already in the middle of a serious nursing shortage," stated Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN, President of the Ontario Nurses Association (ONA). "This policy will mean even less nursing care for our patients because money will be taken out of clinical budget to pay for the profits expected by private investors and the high fees charged by consultants."

"Private financing affects the quality of nursing care that is provided," said Lesley Bell, RN, MBA, ONA Chief Executive Officer. "Numerous examples exist in other jurisdictions of corners being cut to make profits, resulting in fewer resources and impacting the way nurses deliver care."

"Hospitals are not commodities to be bought and sold on the market as revenue streams to make money for investors. They are valued public institutions upon which our communities rely for life enhancing and life prolonging care," added Natalie Mehra, Director of the Ontario Health Coalition. "P3 hospitals are poor public policy: damaging for nurses and bad for patients."

"The market forces driving these kinds of business arrangements undermine the expert work that nurses, doctors and other health-care professionals provide. There is clear and substantial evidence that these arrangements are more expensive and result in fewer health-care professionals providing patient care," said Mary Ferguson-Paré, President of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario.

"Based on the evidence, we conclude that the P3 hospital policy will lead to unnecessary additional costs, have a negative impact on work environments, reduce public control over our hospitals, and create a new and powerful stakeholder group invested in dismantling Medicare -- now from inside the hospital's walls," said Doris Grinspun, Executive Director of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. "As RNAO has conveyed again and again to government, the result will be a weakened public health-care system."

In their letter, the nurses concluded, "It will be less expensive to finance and manage our hospitals on a non-profit basis and to maintain public non-profit services throughout the hospitals. Ontario's nurses are urging your government to stop the P3 hospital program and return to a public financing system for our hospitals."

Ontario's McGuinty government has moved faster and farther with P3 hospital privatization than any other province in Canada, including Alberta. Premier McGuinty has now announced at least 25 P3 hospitals with varying levels of privatization. All 25 announced P3 hospitals include private financing and some will include the outsourcing and privatization of additional hospital services and management.

As nurses celebrate Nursing Week they pause to once again urge the McGuinty government to immediately stop P3s.

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The full text of the letter can be found at www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca