

Ontario Health Coalition

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For Immediate Release

Attn: Assignment Editor

Save Public Medicare! Information

**97% of 7,396 People Vote to Keep Woodstock's Hospital 100% Public:
Ontario Health Coalition**

Results of a Saturday November 26 community-wide vote on potential plans to introduce a P3 hospital in Woodstock were announced this morning. The results are as follows:

Ballot question I support a new Woodstock hospital that is 100% non-profit, publicly owned, operated and funded.

Yes votes	7,177
No votes	219
Total votes	7,396

Total votes cross-province:

The Woodstock plebiscite is the third of a series of cross-province plebiscites organized by the Ontario Health Coalition and local health coalitions to stop the P3 privatization of our hospitals. In June, the coalition held a plebiscite in St. Catharines that garnered over 13,000 votes. Last week, on November 19, the coalition held a plebiscite in North Bay that garnered 8,820 votes.

With the completion of Woodstock's plebiscite, the coalition has now received over 29,000 votes from residents in three communities. Over 97% of voters oppose the P3 privatization of our local hospitals.

Putting the vote in context:

- In the last municipal election approx. 8,400 people voted, in the federal election approx. 13,000 people voted in Woodstock and area polls.
- Woodstock's current city & county councillors were elected by 1,800 - 3,500 votes.
- The total population of Woodstock is approx. 33,000, including children.

What was said:

"We're proud to send such a significant message from the people of our community to our MPP and the Liberal government. We ask that Ernie Hardeman take the message to caucus and Ontario's legislature that our community wants a publicly-funded hospital run entirely on a non-profit basis," said Kim Yardy, Oxford Health Coalition co chair. "This vote

sends a strong message to the Liberal government that our community believes that the high costs of for-profit privatization of hospital infrastructure will suck money away from doctors, nurses, support staff and beds. Our community feels strongly that hospitals are not commodities, but are public services and should be kept that way.”

In total, health coalitions have garnered over 29,000 votes to stop P3 privatization, said Natalie Mehra, director of the Ontario Health Coalition. “It is time for Dalton McGuinty to begin to listen to Ontarians who are hold deep concerns about his privatization plans for our health system and its institutions. The provincial government has never had a mandate to move ahead with these P3 hospitals. The huge turnouts for these votes show that community members feel strongly enough to come out in the tens of thousands even in poor weather to join a grassroots campaign to keep our hospital infrastructure public.”

Background:

Ontario’s provincial government has now announced 22 P3 hospital projects, despite running against these privatization schemes in the last provincial election. This is the largest attempt to privatize hospital assets and services in Canada’s history. The Ontario Health Coalition has mounted plebiscites (referendums called by the citizens) in communities across Ontario to force the government to revert to cheaper public financing of hospitals, and to maintain all hospital services as non-profit.

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