

# Ontario Health Coalition

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October 1, 2007  
For Immediate Release

Attn: Assignment Editor

## Health Coalition releases new report: Damning evidence from Ontario's private for-profit clinics

Toronto – “First Do No Harm”. That is the warning issued by the Ontario Health Coalition in light of John Tory’s campaign to open the gates to U.S. style for-profit hospitals and clinics. The coalition released a report containing the evidence of higher costs, worsening staff shortages and closures of local health services caused by for-profit clinics of the exact model proposed by John Tory this election campaign.

“Many physicians are deeply concerned about the negative impact of these for-profit hospitals and clinics on our patients. We are concerned that for-profit clinics will skim healthier patients out of hospitals, leaving the public system to care for more complex patients with less money. In addition, the linking of insured to uninsured services in for-profit clinics presents barriers for Ontarios who cannot - and should not- pay for essential healthcare services,” said Dr. Danielle Martin, chair of Canadian Doctors for Medicare.

“For-profit ownership has nothing to do with wait times. To reduce wait times we need to focus urgent attention on increasing the number of nurses, doctors and health professionals and improving the organization of care. An expansion of private for-profit clinics will worsen shortages and prevent sound organization of care; it will shunt scarce resources over to the private sector instead,” said Doris Grinspun, Executive Director of the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario.

“Tory’s proposal would open the floodgates to U.S.-style for-profit privatization of *all* our hospital services, including the doctors and nurses. While John Tory’s proposal may benefit the for-profit health lobby, it does not help patients,” noted Natalie Mehra, director of the Ontario Health Coalition. “Most Ontarians believe it is wrong to make profit from a cancer patient. This study shows that for-profit hospitals are not only an affront to our values, but are also a danger to our public health system.”

### Key Findings:

1. For-profit ownership has no relation to wait times. In fact, recent cuts to for-profit lab clinics in towns across Ontario have resulted in increased line ups for blood tests. The for-profit MRI- CT clinics reduced capacity in the public hospital system.
2. There are not enough health professionals to sustain a private tier of for-profit clinics. The for-profit MRI/CT clinics have worsened staff shortages in local hospitals, leading to cuts in the non-profit hospitals. Since they are not set up for emergencies or complex patients, they take the lighter work, leaving behind the heavy care and less staff to deal with it.
3. The for-profits favour urban centres where there is a bigger “market” from which they can make money. Diagnosticare x-ray clinics were closed down in small towns across Ontario, leaving patients to travel further for services, because the company found 15% profit rates not high enough.
4. The for-profit clinics are rife with secret contracts, even though taxpayers are funding them. The provincial auditor found the for-profit cancer treatment centre at Sunnybrook cost more than public cancer centres with taxpayers footing the bill. After receiving millions in provincial and municipal grants funded by taxpayers, Diagnosticare shut down local services to the detriment of patients.

**For more information: Ontario Health Coalition cell 416-230-6402**

