

# Ontario Health Coalition

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For Immediate Release

Attn: Assignment Editor

## Giant Rocking Chair Tour: “Rock-in” for Improved Long-Term Care

\*\*NB: see changed location for Sault Ste. Marie event below.

Ontario-wide – The Ontario Health Coalition is working with hundreds of groups to tour the province with a giant 10-foot tall rocking chair. The goal is to raise awareness about levels of care and access to care in Ontario’s long-term care homes. Almost 80,000 Ontarians, many of them elderly, live in long-term care homes (often known as nursing homes).

- The level of care needs has risen dramatically in Ontario’s long-term care homes as more than 18,500 hospital beds have been closed since 1990 and patients are moved out of hospitals ever quicker and sicker. But care levels have not matched the increasing needs of the residents. The result is unsafe environments for residents, staff and caregivers.
  - Since 2002 Ontario’s chief coroner has reported 29 homicides in long-term care homes.
- Ontario has the highest level of care needs among comparable jurisdictions because many more hospital beds have been cut here. Ontario has cut more hospital beds than any other province in Canada and ranks last in the country in numbers of hospital beds per person.
- Almost 2/3 of long-term care residents have dementia and almost half have aggressive behaviours.
- Access to care is poor with long-waits and increasingly severe rationing of access to care.
  - There have been more than 20,000 people on wait lists for long-term care home spaces for more than a decade.

The Ontario Health Coalition, local health coalitions, friends and allies have identified two key demands of the next Ontario provincial government to address this situation:

1. Set a minimum care staffing standard of 4-hours of hands-on care per day per resident.
2. Improve access to care and reduce wait times.

The coalition will be collecting 20,000 signatures on postcards as they travel with the chair to symbolize the >20,000 people waiting for long-term care placements.

### Giant “Rock-in” Chair Tour Dates & Locations

The giant rocking chair will go to 27 communities over the next two-and-a-half weeks. In each location, we will hold a media event featuring our 10-foot tall rocking chair and press conferences with family councils, residents, seniors' groups, unions, nurses, careworkers, families and long-term care administrators. Each event will be approx. 1/2 hour.

The rocking chair has already visited Burlington, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Welland, Brampton, Guelph, London, Stratford, Scarborough, Oshawa, Peterborough and Barrie!

Upcoming locations include:

#### Wednesday, May 28

**Goderich** 10 a.m., Courthouse Park, at Courthouse Square

**Meaford** 3 p.m., sidewalk in front of Meaford Long Term Care Centre, 135 William St.

#### Thursday, May 29

**Bracebridge** 10 a.m. Memorial Park (near Manitoba St. & Kimberley Ave.)

**Parry Sound** 2 p.m. Waubuno Park (end of Prospect St.)

Friday, May 30

**Espanola** 10 a.m., by the Espanola sign across from Tim Horton's at 701 Centre St.

**Elliot Lake** 2:30 p.m., grassy area at corner of Hillside Dr. N. & Ontario Ave. (close to City Hall)

Saturday, May 31

**St. Joseph Island** 10 a.m., Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 374, 1534 Richards St. (front lawn)

Monday, June 2

**Sault Ste. Marie** 10 a.m., sidewalk in front of main entrance to Extendicare Maple View, 650 Northern Ave.

*\*Please note: this location has been changed.*

**Sudbury** 3:30 p.m., sidewalk in front of Elizabeth Centre, 2100 Main St., Val Caron

Tuesday, June 3

**Cobourg** 10 a.m., Victoria Park, King & McGill Sts.

**Belleville** 2:30 p.m., sidewalk across from City Hall on Front St.

Wednesday, June 4

**Ottawa** 10 a.m., Confederation Park at corner of Laurier Ave. W. & Elgin St.

**Kingston** 2:30 p.m., Riverview Park across from Rideaucrest Home, 175 Rideau St.

Thursday, June 5

**Cornwall** 10 a.m., meet in front of Justice Building, 340 Pitt St.

**Chesterville** 1 p.m., Chesterville Waterfront Park.

Friday, June 6

**Toronto** 10 a.m., Parkette directly east of Queen's Park, Queen's Park Circle & Grosvenor St.

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**For more information:**

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