

# Ontario Health Coalition

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Attn: Assignment Editor

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## **Coalition Slams “Bullying” Tactics by Premier and Health Minister to Force Through P3 Hospital Privatization Without Public Accountability: Kingston Hospital Latest in More than \$4 Billion in Hospital P3 Privatization Under Ontario’s Liberal Government**

Toronto, Ontario – A bus load of volunteers from Kingston Ontario travelled to Toronto today to deliver 10,000 ballots from a community referendum they held recently to stop the P3 privatization of their community’s new hospital. Almost 10,000 residents voted with 96 per cent opposing the P3 privatization scheme.

Kingston’s new hospital is the latest of a slew of privatized P3 hospitals pushed through by the Liberal government, despite promises and rhetoric about protecting public health care. In fact, to date, Ontario’s Liberal government has built more than \$4 billion in privatized P3 hospitals since the Brampton and Royal Ottawa P3 hospitals that are widely acknowledged to be financial disasters. Ontario’s Auditor General found the Brampton P3 hospital to be more than \$200 million more than a public hospital would have been. None of the \$4 billion in privatized P3 deals built since the Brampton project has been audited and there is no real independent oversight of the huge amounts of public money funneled into these projects.

“P3” or Public Private Partnership, is a term for privatization of. In Ontario’s P3 hospitals a consortium of multinational for-profit companies builds the new hospital and privatizes its management and some services for 30-year long privatization deals. The level of privatization and the long duration of the deals are unprecedented in Ontario’s public non-profit hospitals.

Today in the Legislature, the Premier and Minister of Health responded to a question on this issue by NDP Health Critic France Gelin as by threatening that the hospital would not be built if not for P3 privatization. The coalition takes issue with these claims. P3 privatization is an extremely drawn out and slow process. Already, the complex tendering process required by 30-year long privatization deals and massive financing privatization has meant that the Kingston hospital is months later than planned. Every P3 hospital in Ontario has been a year or more later than planned.

There are alternatives to P3 privatization. There is nothing to stop the government from building the hospital as a design-build project which would be much faster to accomplish than the complex tendering that they have just started. This method would have the added benefit of stopping the long-term privatization deals keeping the management of the hospital and its lands public, along with its services. The coalition also notes that the government could issue “Medicare bonds” to raise capital for hospital projects without falling into the P3 privatization trap.

“We have come to Queen’s Park to tell the government that we want a public non-profit hospital,” said Ross Sutherland, R.N., Kingston Health Coalition chairperson. “The government is trying to bully Kingston by threatening that we will not get a new hospital unless we waste \$100 million or more on a privatized P3 hospital.”

“Almost 10,000 Kingston residents voted to tell the government to stop the bullying, be fiscally responsible and fund health care services not multinational for-profit consortia, and listen to our community,” he concluded.

**For more information: Ontario Health Coalition 416-441-2502.**