

# Ontario Health Coalition

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## **Profits poached from public health: Ontario government must cancel for-profit MRI and CT clinic, says Ontario Health Coalition**

The Ontario government's promise that for-profit MRI and CT clinics would not threaten public MRI services has already been broken. For-profit MRI clinics are poaching scarce radiologists and radiation technologists from the public system, even though the government swore this would not happen. What's more, the for-profit clinics, which the government touted as promising great efficiencies, are four months late in opening.

"The government must cancel the contracts of for-profit MRI and CT clinics, which have already proved to be parasites on the publicly-funded healthcare system", said Ross Sutherland of the Ontario Health Coalition on hearing the news that more radiation technologists have been raided from public hospitals, causing public hospitals to cut back the hours of their MRI services.

To date, no budget or procedures have been provided for monitoring the clinics to ensure that queue jumping does not take place. Neither has the Eves government taken action to manage waiting lists for public MRIs and CTs. This makes the concept of waiting lists integrated with the for-profit clinics a cynical fiction.

The government has not established safeguards to protect patients and the public purse from conflicts of interest where radiologists who operate for-profit MRI and CT centres also work in public hospitals, and are able allocate patients to waiting lists and direct them to specific centres. This means the radiologists can direct easier, more profitable cases to their own private, for-profit clinics, where they will pocket public tax dollars that could have remained in the public system. The government is creating incentives for corruption in our healthcare system.

Neither has money been announced to compensate hospitals for income lost when third party scans are directed away from hospitals to for-profit private clinics.

This foolish and expensive ideological gambit must be stopped before more damage is done to public health care.

?The money slated for the clinics should be put into expanding diagnostic imaging services run by hospitals,? added Ethel Meade, co-chair of the Ontario Health Coalition.  
?The provincial government should be taking advantage of the federal money designated for more MRIs to expand capabilities within the public system. This will produce more MRIs and CTs, cheaper and quicker than any other alternative?.

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For more information: 416-441-2502