

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
RELEASE

December 7, 1999

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Attention: Assignment Editors**

OHC warns Ontarians to get ready for new Long Term Care legislation

TORONTO - The Ontario Health Coalition is today alerting the public to a major policy initiative that will effect all Ontarians and their entitlement to Long Term Care.

In a meeting held Fri., Dec. 3, the Health Ministry confirmed the following:

- That it was writing a new Long Term Care Act.
- That in addition to Bill 173, the new Long Term Care Act will also replace the Nursing Homes Act, and the Homes for the Aged and Rest Homes Act
- That there would be no open and full public consultation on the legislation, which is targeted for spring 2000.

"The government clearly plans to steam roller the new Long Term Care Act", said Ross Sutherland, OHC spokesperson and co-chair of the Kingston Health Coalition. "This is the first major piece of health care legislation. Considering the many problems caused by Tory health policy in community and long term care, Ontarians must be given an opportunity to put forward their concerns with respect to long term care regulations, service maximums, eligibility criteria, funding and other issues. Without consultations, we will be stuck with more ideologically driven changes rather than improved health care."

The OHC is calling on its more than 100 member organizations to pressure Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer to hold full (and not just a targeted) public consultation. These consultations should include consumers, providers, advocacy organizations, unions and all other stakeholders.

"Each and every one of us will be affected by plans for this sector. We are all stakeholders and have every right to be involved in open, public consultation on this most serious of matters. Most importantly, without public consultation, we will most certainly see big problems for those relying on Long Term Care - similar to the chaos produced by Tory cuts to the hospital sector", said Irene Harris, OHC Co-Chair

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