

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
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MRI Buyback A Sound Investment -Health Coalition Slams Tory Hypocrisy

Toronto - Bringing the for-profit MRI clinics back into the public system will save money and reduce wait times says Ross Sutherland, spokesperson for the Ontario Health Coalition.

"The Conservative hypocrisy on these issues is stunning," said Sutherland. "In the dying days of their government they pushed through five-year private deals to transfer public health care dollars to private corporations with no accountability. Despite evidence from across Canada and around the world that these clinics would cost more they went ahead and now have the nerve to blame the current government for trying to fix their bad policy direction."

"The Conservatives promised that these private clinics would not take staff from the public system," said Patty Rout, member of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union representing MRI technologists. "Most private clinics poached public hospital staff often forcing the public hospitals to cut the hours they could run their MRI machines. We are extremely pleased that the staff poaching and irrational use of resources will be stopped. We are looking forward to the formal confirmation of the fulfilment of this election promise to protect our universal one tier health system."

Bringing Ontario's private MRI clinics back into the public, non-profit health care system will:

- * provide more MRI and CT scans for the same money. This will reduce wait times.
- * integrate services, making better use of machines and staff. This will improve efficiency and decrease cost.
- * make accountability possible. By removing the cloak of business confidentiality we will be better able to monitor how our health care dollars are being spent.

* remove the threat of two tier imaging services.

* stop the skimming of easier and more lucrative tests from public hospitals by private clinics.

* provide for better wait list management, leading to a reduction in wait times.

"The Conservative policies of promoting for-profit hospitals, implementing for-profit home care and private MRI-CT clinics drove up the cost of health care unnecessarily. Reestablishment of public control over the clinics is the first step towards restoring and strengthening the public system. Now the Liberal government needs to cancel the costly P3 hospitals," concluded Sutherland.

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