

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
RELEASE

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For Profit Hospitals and Clinics Threaten the Future of Medicare: Ontario Health Coalition Launches Fight Back

Toronto - Ontario Health Coalition spokespeople released details of a province-wide pre-election campaign to save and strengthen Medicare.

The coalition kicked off a mass pledge campaign to highlight key criteria to strengthen public Medicare and to stop for-profit healthcare. Already the coalition has received orders for over 100,000 pledge forms. Over the next several weeks, banners, street signs and window signs will go up in communities across the province as concerned community members send a message to their local election candidates. Other coalition plans include a mass march on April 5 in Toronto. Cavalcades of cars, minivans and buses are travelling across Ontario on that day, picking up more people in each town as they pass. The coalition also plans to canvass in ridings across Ontario and to hold a series of townhall meetings on key access and standards issues in nursing home and community/homecare.

"We strenuously oppose for-profit hospitals and clinics. They cost more, they lead to bed and staff cuts and they threaten the future of Medicare," stated coalition co chair Irene Harris. "We have already seen the diminished access and standards caused by privatization in home and long term care. We are telling Ontario's politicians that they must strengthen Medicare. They must improve access and patient and staff protections. They must stop for-profit healthcare."

The coalition pledge calls for Ontarians to commit to only support election candidates who will work to:

Strengthen Medicare

- Restore the federal share of health spending to at least 25% and ensure health spending goes to healthcare
- Cover homecare, rehabilitation, diagnostics and pharmacare with the principles of Medicare

- Protect Medicare from trade agreements
- Promote non-profit community health centres
- Control the costs of drugs and get cheaper generic drugs to the market faster
- Improve conditions in nursing homes and provide supportive care at home for seniors and those with disabilities
- Plan for the future to meet population need for healthcare workers

Stop For-Profit Healthcare

- Stop for-profit hospitals, MRI/CT clinics and labs, and redirect funding to public hospitals and clinics
- Ban queue-jumping B ensure waiting lists are based on need not wealth
- Stop the privatization of nursing homes and increase public control over them
- Reinstate non-profit homecare
- Stop delisting medically necessary OHIP services

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