

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Attention: Assignment Editors**

Coalition Urges Government to Stop the Cover-Up in Hospital Emergency Services

TORONTO- The Ontario Health Coalition responded to today's reannouncement of reorganized ambulance to hospital communications systems by lambasting the Minister for engaging in a propaganda strategy instead of taking serious steps to deal with the critical issues affecting the province's emergency rooms.

Pointing out that today's announcement is largely a repetition of an announcement made a month ago by then Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer, the Coalition is demanding that the Ministry come clean on the emergency room crisis. The government is attempting to cover up its lack of results in dealing with emergency room backlogs, coalition Co Chair Irene Harris charged. "What the Minister isn't saying is that they will no longer publicly release the numbers of emergency rooms on critical care bypass and emergency redirect because the numbers have not improved. In a year in which we have not had a flu epidemic to blame, the majority of Toronto's emergency rooms are still routinely turning away patients. Having lost one of its favourite excuses, the government is making much out of a small piece of what is really needed to fix this crisis."

"The closure of over 9,000 critical, acute and chronic care hospital beds, the lay off of 26,000 hospital workers, the staffing crisis in homecare, the critical shortage of long term care beds - these are the key to emergency room backups. The government cut too deeply and now it is practicing avoidance in dealing with the consequences of its rash behaviour." continued Ms. Harris, "Hospitals need stable, multi-year funding so that they can plan quality services; they need enough beds with enough staff to provide for patients needs; they need a government that is committed to providing good healthcare, not just good propaganda."

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 416-441-2502