

# Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA  
RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Attention: Assignment Editors**

## OHC calls for full public consultation and release of crucial Long Term Care document

Toronto - The Ontario Health Coalition is today urging the provincial government to immediately confirm or deny persistent rumours that it plans to fast-track new long-term care regulations without full public consultation.

In an open letter to Premier Mike Harris and Health Ministers Cam Jackson and Elizabeth Witmer, the OHC is demanding full public consultation as well as the release of a key document "Service Directions for CCAC's and other Long Term Care Community Agencies" published by the Long Term Care Division of the Ministry of Health. This document has been quietly circulated for a number of months to a hand-picked few, but is being withheld from the public. We understand that it contains draft policies regarding eligibility, prioritization and service maximums for CCACs.

The new regulations will have significant bearing on who is eligible for long-term care services, how much service they can have and will set priorities among different consumers.

"Given the line of argument advanced by the government in a recent Health Services Appeal Board ruling, we fear that new long term care regulations or policy may contain less entitlement to many services, restrictions to access and to a full appeal procedure as well as to the Bill of Rights which the current Long Term Care Act contains," said Lydia Mazzuto, OHC spokesperson.

Last month, the Health Services Appeal Board ruled in favour of Mr. Ian Strathern of Niagara and against the government. However, legal council representing the Health Ministry argued strenuously that insofar as the government of Ontario is concerned, Ontarians had no right to appeal the decisions made about the care assigned by the CCAC program in Ontario. The Health Ministry lawyer also argued that the CCAC program is not approved by the Ministry (despite the approximately \$1 billion spent annually.)

"That is why we are also calling on the government to confirm that Community Care Access Centres in Ontario will be immediately appointed approved agencies under the Long Term Care Act, thereby giving the public access to the protection and rights prescribed in the act."

The Ontario Health Coalition is composed of 90 member organizations committed to maintaining and enhancing a quality, single-tier public health care system

**FOR MORE INFORMATION: 416-441-2502**