

Ontario Health Coalition

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

Throne Speech - Tories still stuck in the privatization rut

TORONTO- Irene Harris, Co-chair of the Ontario Health Coalition, said today that "the Lieutenant Governor's statement on health care demonstrates that the government is maintaining its focus on the privatization of public health care. After saying that money is not the answer, the speech then suggests we go to private sector partnerships. All this says is that more of Ontario's health care dollar goes to profit.

Harris outlined that "Like someone with a hammer, who thinks that everything is a nail, the government is still stuck on privatization,

- without disclosing the costs of privatization to the public,
- without revealing the research which demonstrates that there is no long term business sense for such partnerships, and
- without demonstrating that putting more health care taxation dollars into private profit is somehow going to make the system better."

The government seems to be ignoring the basics of good public health care. Some of what we have drawn from research or common sense suggests the following as the thinking behind the founding of Canada's good public health care system:

- Public medicare is a way of pooling our resources to buy in bulk.
- Commodification of health services introduces a host of additional costs: advertising, lobbying, administration and needless duplication.
- Compared to the cost of health care in the USA, our system of the single payer is far more efficient, so that point for point, more of the Canadian health care dollar goes into health care.
- Introducing private health care provides no benefit other than to the persons who profit from investing in it.

- Privately owned, for profit hospitals are less efficient and more expensive than are public, not for profit hospitals.
- Canada decided on publicly financed medicare as being the fairest for all citizens. By pooling our risk and resources across the largest group possible, we are able to provide good health care for every citizen as long as the political will exists.

"We urge the government not to be rushed into adding to the level of privatization in Ontario's health care system. Far more helpful would be consultation around privatization which includes a majority of people who do not have special interests in profit from the health care system," Harris added.

The Ontario Health Coalition is Ontario's most broadly representative voice for public health care policy. Its membership encompasses 300 member groups: community health coalitions, health care worker at all levels, unions, social development agencies, women's groups, seniors' groups, low income and homeless people's organizations, ethnic and multiracial minorities' groups, faith-based organizations and other citizens' organizations.

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