

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Attention: Assignment Editors**

Urgent Province-Wide Campaign Against Harris Private Hospital Plans Targets MPPs in their Home Constituencies

Toronto - Urgent actions will be held tomorrow, May 23 across the province at Conservative MPP offices. The actions are planned to coincide with constituency week when MPPs are out of the legislature in their home ridings. The protests, led by local constituents in each riding, have been called by the Ontario Health Coalition to respond to Mike Harris' recent speculation about privatizing public hospitals. A list of the local events is attached.

"After years of trying to hide their dismantling of public Medicare the Harris Conservatives are finally out of the closet with their real plans for our healthcare system. When asked about private hospitals, Mike Harris said "Why not?". The real question is "why?" " said coalition co chair Irene Harris. "Given the well-known risks of privatization, the obvious explanation is the Conservatives' close ties with the corporations and investors who have always opposed Medicare because they seek to benefit from opening up a new market for their profit."

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The busy week of province-wide actions will culminate in Toronto on May 24th, at 7:30 pm with a Music Alert benefit at Convocation Hall protesting the privatization of cancer care at Sunnybrook Hospital. Featured entertainment includes Rick Mercer, Gordon Downie, Shirley Douglas and Sarah Polley. "The recent privatization of the radiation services at Sunnybrook Hospital undermines the spirit of the Canada Health Act, "stated

Carolyn Egan, co-chair of the Toronto Health Coalition and Friends of Medicare - Toronto. "It is essential this decision by the Harris government be overturned now."

The Ontario Health Coalition is growing! We now represent over 150 member organizations including local health coalitions; health, advocacy, seniors', women's, immigrants, and social service groups; unions; congregations, and others. The coalition's mandate is to protect and extend a quality, one-tier, universal, public Medicare system.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 416-441-2502