

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Attention: Assignment Editors**

Seniors are Suffering: New Evidence from Cross-Province Hearings

Toronto - Seniors, and others who require long term and home health care, are suffering under Ontario government health policy. This is the message of a new report released today by a group of ten health and seniors' organizations. The report - compiled from hearings attended by over 800 people and held in seven cities across the province - details the experiences of dozens of Ontarians and organizations from all corners of the province who use or work in the long term health care sector. The report will be used to try to improve the direction of Ontario's upcoming Long Term Care Act. Ministry officials have confirmed that the new act, which will be an omnibus bill covering long term care, homecare and all facility care, has been in process for over a year. The planned timing for its introduction is being kept under wraps.

"In city after city we heard from staff who are heavy-hearted at the lack of time they have to provide care, faced with higher numbers of patients and increasingly complex cases. People wept as they told us of their parents - seniors of sound mind - who are forced to wear and use diapers because there is not enough staff to help them get to a washroom. The humiliation and loss of dignity is horrible. These situations are directly related to a government policy of deliberate deregulation and lowering of standards," stated Natalie Mehra, Provincial Coordinator of the Ontario Health Coalition which hosted six of the seven forums. "

"The government's underfunding of Long Term Care has left seniors suffering from severe neglect, whether they are getting care at home or living in a facility. It can only get worse with Bill 46 which will make it illegal for hospitals and Access Centres to go over the budget arbitrarily doled out to them by Queen's Park. Funding decisions are made with an eye to the government's political priorities, such as cutting taxes or looking generous in ridings where a by-election is coming up," added Ethel Meade, Co chair of the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations, one of the sponsoring groups.

Sponsoring organizations for the report are: Alliance of Seniors to Protect Canada's Social Programs, Canadian Pensioners Concerned, Care Watch Toronto, Concerned Friends of Ontario Citizens in Care Facilities, Congress of Union Retirees of Canada, Older Women's Network, Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations, Ontario Health Coalition, and Ontario Nurses' Association. An executive summary is attached. Full copies of the report are available by calling the Ontario Health Coalition. [Click here to download the report as an MS WORD document.](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 416-441-2502