

Ontario Health Coalition

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For Profit MRI and CT Clinics Slower, More Expensive, More Risky: Report

Toronto - The Ontario Health Coalition released a review of the available evidence on for-profit MRI and CT Clinics in response to Ontario government plans to introduce 25 MRI and CT Scan clinics open to for-profit corporations for bidding. Despite Health Minister Tony Clement's claim that the government will only privatize when services can be provided faster, safer, cheaper and better, study authors were unable to find evidence to support these claims with respect to for-profit MRI and CT clinics.

Among the report's key findings about other jurisdictions that have private MRI and CT clinics:

- Opening for-profit clinics would, at best, have minimal impact on waiting times, and probably increase waits in the public sector.
- For profit clinics allow people to queue jump without respect to medical need. This is happening in Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec and Nova Scotia.
- There is a higher risk of poorer quality in stand alone for-profit clinics than in hospitals.
- It is less expensive to expand services in the public sector than to pay for-profit clinics to initiate new MRI services. Calgary's experience indicates it could cost 21 - 25% more.
- For-profit clinics, where doctors have a financial interest in the facility, have a higher incidence of medically inappropriate referrals and less service to the poor and elderly.
- For-profit clinics draw critical personnel away from the public health care system.

"It is questionable what social or economic benefit can be derived from opening for-profit health care clinics that will likely detract from the public system, have little public accountability, escalate costs and increase risks to patients," study author and emergency nurse Ross Sutherland said today. "If they are not faster, better, cheaper and safer - and the evidence indicates that they are not - then why hand over control to profit-seeking corporations?"

"The recruiting of CT and MRI technologists from public hospitals is on the horizon," added Patty Rout, Chair of Hospital Professionals Division of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. "Given the acute shortages of technologists this plan would only further erode the ability of public hospitals to provide these services. Soon there will be even fewer technologists left in hospitals to do the most time consuming and invasive procedures."

To download the report [click here](#). To view the report online [click here](#).

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