



Monday May 30, 2016
For Immediate Release

Attn: Assignment Editor

Advisory: Every Vote Is Counted!

Health Coalitions Across Ontario Deliver Results of Massive Grassroots Hospital Cuts Referendum to Legislature

(Toronto, ON) – Volunteers from across Ontario will travel to Ontario’s Legislature on Tuesday May 31, where together with the Ontario Health Coalition, the total vote tally for the massive grassroots referendum will be released. Volunteers will deliver their communities’ ballots to the Legislature in a highly visual media event.

Leaders and representatives of the Opposition Parties in the Legislature will be on hand to receive the ballots and will be asked to bring the message that Ontario’s hospital cuts must stop, into the Legislature. They will also be asked to ensure that the ballots are delivered to Ontario’s Premier Kathleen Wynne.

When & Where

Tuesday May 31

Toronto, 11:30 a.m., Ontario Police Memorial Park (corner of Grosvenor St. & Queen’s Park Cres. E.)

Contact Natalie Mehra, Executive Director, Ontario Health Coalition, 416-441-2502 (office); Kim Johnston, Campaign Director, Ontario Health Coalition, 416-441-2502 (office).

What Media events to release the total cross-province vote tally as part of Ontario-wide volunteer-led referendum.

Who Ontario Health Coalition and local coalitions across Ontario.

Local Coalition/Key Contacts across Ontario

Brockville Curtis Coates, co-chair, Brockville Health Coalition, 613-246-2015.

Chatham Shirley Roebuck, co-chair, Chatham Health Coalition, 226-402-2724.

Durham Trish McAuliffe, co-chair, Durham Health Coalition, 905-706-5806.

Essex County Kim DeYong, co-chair, Essex County Health Coalition, 519-839-6328.

Guelph Magee McGuire, co-chair, Guelph Health Coalition, 519-767-0084.

Hamilton Rolf Gerstenberger, co-chair, Hamilton Health Coalition, 289-260-9547.

Kawartha Lakes Marlene Beaman-McQuay, chair, Kawartha Lakes Health Coalition, 705-324-6028.

Kingston Harold Pickering, co-chair, Kingston Health Coalition, 343-333-6412.

London Peter Bergmanis, co-chair, London Health Coalition, 519-860-4403.

Midland Fran Moreau, 705-245-7611.

Niagara Sue Hotte, co-chair, Niagara Health Coalition, 905-932-1646.

North Bay Mike Bisailon, co-chair, North Bay Health Coalition, 705-492-8818.

Northumberland Linda Mackenzie-Nicholas, co-chair Northumberland Health Coalition, 416-809-2601.

Orillia Lynne Hancock, co-chair, Orillia Health Coalition, 705-259-2750.

Ottawa Al Dupuis, co-chair, Ottawa Health Coalition, 613-808-7710.

Oxford County Bryan J. Smith, Oxford Coalition for Social Justice, 519-456-5270.

Quinte West Rhonda Reynolds, Campaign Organizer, reyron12@gmail.com.

Sault Ste. Marie Margo Dale, co-chair, Sault and Area Health Coalition, 705-255-1498.

Sarnia Shirley Roebuck, co-chair, Chatham Health Coalition, 226-402-2724.



Smiths Falls Kathy Gilligan, 613-283-6495.

St. Joseph Island Maria Smith, St. Joseph Island Health Coalition, 705-246-2483.

St. Marys Chris West, 519-284-3310.

Stratford Treena Hollingworth, co-chair, Stratford and Area Health Coalition, 647-537-4357.

Thunder Bay Jules Tupker, co-chair, Thunder Bay Health Coalition, 807-577-5946.

Timmins Linda Dolbec, 705-363-7666.

Wallaceburg Shirley Roebuck, co-chair, Chatham Health Coalition, 226-402-2724.

Windsor Ken Lewenza Jr., co-chair, Windsor Health Coalition, 519-819-0830.

Background

Ontario's hospital cuts are the deepest in the country, and despite claims by government, the services that are being dismantled in local public hospitals are not replaced in community care. In fact, many communities are losing vital services and across the province whole categories of services are being privatized. Without any sound capacity planning, hospital redevelopment decisions seem to be driven by political opportunism and divorced from service needs. Tens of millions are wasted in renovations and redevelopments, only to find services closing down within a few years. Planning, such as it is, bears no relation to community need anymore.

The cuts are devastating. Entire community hospitals are on the line. Services like birthing; emergency departments; medical and surgical beds; mental health units; chronic care beds; surgeries and diagnostic tests; and thousands of nurses, health professionals, caregivers, and vital patient support workers and all the work they do --- all of these are threatened with cuts in different communities. In many communities hospitals are running at dangerous levels of overcrowding.

By every reasonable measure, Ontario has now dropped to the bottom of the country in hospital services. We have the fewest hospital beds left – by far – of any province. Only Chile and Mexico in the entire developed world have fewer hospital beds than does Ontario. We have the least amount of nursing care per patient (both RN and RPN combined). Patients are moved out of hospital earlier in Ontario than any other province – and we have the highest readmission rates as people end up back in emergency departments.

Every service that is being cut is privatized, moved out of town or lost entirely. Patients are now required to drive longer and longer distances for care, or are being charged hundreds or even thousands of dollars in private clinics for cataract surgeries, colonoscopies and other care than used to be provided – under OHIP – in our local public hospitals. People are waiting on stretchers, in the worst cases for days, for admission to hospitals that are filled to overcapacity.

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For more information: contact Natalie Mehra, Executive Director, Ontario Health Coalition, 416-441-2502 (office); Kim Johnston, Campaign Director, Ontario Health Coalition, 416-441-2502 (office).