



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2019

Leaked Draft Health Care Legislation a "Gargantuan Nightmare Scenario": Community and Labour Groups Join Forces for Major Fightback

(TORONTO, ON) – Calling it a "bombshell": the Ontario Health Coalition and the Ontario Federation of Labour responded to a leaked document revealing a draft health care legislation written by the Ford government in secret that would create a "super agency" with extraordinary powers to restructure Ontario's entire health care system. The Ontario NDP opened up the document to public scrutiny by providing it to the Ontario media on Thursday.

The draft legislation takes most of the worst elements of the existing Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) and piles them into one new centralized super agency, warned the Ontario Health Coalition.

"It is like a gargantuan nightmare scenario," said Health Coalition Board Member Sara Labelle. "It gives the Ford government massive powers to restructure virtually every part of health care with no democracy, no consultation, no checks and balances, and no recourse. It gives sweeping power to privatize entire sectors at will. This would be devastating for Ontario."

"This draft legislation eliminates the progressive amendments we won to the LHINs legislation, including open Board meetings, requirements for community consultation, requirements to measure and plan for population health needs, appeals, and I could go on and on," added Executive Director of the Health Coalition Natalie Mehra. "It contains not one single mention of the principles that govern our public health care system. It contains no goals. It's just a truly massive power grab to restructure and privatize with the stroke of a pen without any ethics."

The Ontario Federation of Labour vowed to use its million-member might to work with the Ontario Health Coalition to safeguard public health care and local health care services like public hospitals and public non-profit homecare.

"The people of Ontario are vehemently opposed to any plans to reduce or privatize our public services," said Ontario Federation of Labour President Chris Buckley. "Ontarians certainly didn't give Doug Ford a mandate to privatize our health care system, and we are going to fight like hell at every step, and across this entire province to make sure that he doesn't."

Both organizations reported that the plans outlined in the draft legislation have been hatched in secret. There has been no public consultation whatsoever on the central ideas of the legislation: mega-mergers of health care providers like hospitals and privatization of entire categories of services.

"The Ford government has no mandate for any of this. They never once mentioned it in the provincial election," noted Labelle.

"This is like the Harris era restructuring on steroids," warned Mehra noting that the Provincial Auditor's assessment of the last round of hospital restructuring found it cost \$3.9 billion and threw health care into crisis. "The bill reads like a blueprint for empire-building CEOs and expansionist

private health care corporations. Like the last round of mass amalgamations, the prime beneficiaries are CEOs, consultants, and planners. Local communities found their services were devastated and their local Boards gone. They no longer had any voice."

"Forced mergers and closures are not what Ontario needs. What we need is a plan for better publicly funded health care," said Buckley. "We need a health care system that provides for every person in this province, with sufficient infrastructure to support the number of beds that are actually needed to care for Ontarians when they are sick."

The **Ontario Health Coalition**, which represents more than 400 patient and family groups, seniors' organizations, unions, nurses' groups, health professionals' organizations, student groups, ethno-cultural groups and many others, vowed to use all its strength and work alongside the Ontario Federation of Labour to stop damaging restructuring, mega-mergers and privatization.

The Ontario Federation of Labour represents 54 unions and one million workers in Ontario. For information, visit www.ofl.ca and follow @OFLabour on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

-30-

To arrange interviews or for more information, please contact:

Meagan Perry,
Director of Communications
Ontario Federation of Labour
mperry@ofl.ca | 416-894-3456

Sara Labelle,
Board Member and spokesperson
Ontario Health Coalition
905-914-4037

cope343