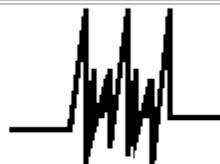


# Ontario Health Coalition

OHC  
NEWSLETTER  
September 2002



## The Pulse



### Backgrounder on Private MRI and CT Clinics

**Timelines....**In June, Clement announced the provincial conservative government's intention to privatize key diagnostic services by creating 25 for-profit MRI and CT clinics across Ontario. Foreign and domestic for-profit corporations will bid for these clinics this fall. Deals are to be signed by the new year, according to Clement.

**Threat to Medicare....**Non-profit hospital services are a cornerstone of Medicare.

Clement's announcement was a serious signal of the Conservatives' intent to Americanize our entire health system -- including establishing corporate control and profit-seeking in hospitals.

**Create a crisis then privatize....** After spending the \$60 million diagnostic equipment fund transferred from the federal government last year on beds, bathtubs and other subsidies for for-profit long corporations who would have bought these items anyway, Clement is now using the waiting lists for MRIs and CTs as a reason to promote his "privatize everything" ideology. The conclusion of our report is clear: if we fund the hospital MRI & CT clinics and deal with staffing issues so that we can increase the hours of operation of current scanners and place new scanners in hospitals, we can reduce wait times as needed and avoid all of the problems that would come with for-profit clinics. No queue jumping should be allowed -- waiting times should be based on need.

**Slower, Costlier, Riskier....** There is no evidence that these clinics will do better than public MRIs and CTs to improve wait times, safety, costs or quality. In fact, the evidence

is that they are costlier and riskier. They cream the most profitable easiest tests and pull scarce personnel out of the public system. They create more problems as the public system struggles to provide the most expensive complex tests with less people and fewer resources.

The Ontario Health Coalition report looked at all of the available evidence regarding for-profit MRI and CT Clinics and found:

- 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 (2 Tier Medicare). 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 and resources away from the public health care system. **To download the report** [click here](#). **To view the report online** [click here](#).



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[Join the Campaign Against For-Profit Helath Care!](#)

[Dates and Venues for the 22 City Tour featuring Maude Barlow against for-profit healthcare](#)

[Urgent Action Alert: Oct 19 Rallies Against For-Profit Hospitals](#)

[For Profit MRI and CT Clinics Slower, More Expensive, More Risky](#)

[UPDATE: For-profit MRI & CT Scan Update: Clement says he's looking at it, Eves says "policy is evolving"](#)

[Backgrounder on For-Profit MRI and CT Clinics](#)

**GM, Ford and DaimlerChrysler have signed a joint letter with the Canadian Auto Workers urging that Canada's national health care system be "preserved and renewed."**

**Romanow Update & OHC Post Romanow Assembly (Jan 18)**

**Fact Sheet: Public Private Partnerships (P3s) or Profits Over Patients? The Facts About For-Profit Hospitals**