

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Attention: Assignment Editors**

OHC charges abuse of process with respect to new Home Care regulation

TORONTO - The Ontario Health Coalition is today charging the Ontario government with abuse of process regarding a new Home Care regulation limiting the amount of homemaking, personal support and nursing services the public is entitled to receive.

On March 30, the OHC held a media conference to announce its plans to publicly distribute the government's secret document "Service Directions for CCAC's and other LTC Community Agencies", a set of draft regulations for the provision of Home Care and Long Term Care. The document, which was anonymously leaked to the OHC, contained alarming directives with respect to eligibility criteria and service maximums and laid the groundwork for the rationing of care by CCAC's. At that time, the OHC called for full and open public consultation before any regulations were finalized.

Regulation #386/99 was signed, sealed and delivered on March 10th but not filed until July 6th, 1999, a month after the provincial election. As late as May 10th, the OHC was given assurances that public consultation regarding the regulation would take place.

Since March 30th, the OHC has been waiting for consultations to begin. Based on then Minister of Long Term Care, Cam Jackson's comments to the media following the OHC announcement, two letters from Mr. Jackson dated May 10th, as well as Premier Harris' statement with respect to a more open and consultative government, the organization has been looking forward to raising its concerns regarding new long term care regulations, service maximums, eligibility criteria and other issues contained in the draft document. We now learn these assurances were given long after the regulation had already been approved by Cabinet.

In his letters, Mr. Jackson assured the OHC that "before any such comprehensive regulation is approved, it will be subject to the type of wide circulation you suggest."

"This is such a breach of public trust and democratic process that we can only assume the intent was to purposefully mislead us and prevent this from becoming an election issue," said Dan Benedict, OHC Co-Chair.

"This regulation does not merely formalize what has been in practice, it has been put in place to remove any real exercise of discretion by the CCACs and the Health Services Appeal and Review Board. In effect, it quite dramatically limits access to care", said Irene Harris, OHC Co-Chair.

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