

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Attention: Assignment Editors

Information Pickets: Toronto and Ottawa, Tues., Jan. 25, 12-12:30 - Witmer's Home Care Policies Forcing Privatization At All Costs - Even If It Costs More

Toronto - The Ontario and Ottawa-Carleton Health Coalitions will information pickets at their Ministry of Health offices, Tues., Jan. 25, 12 - 12:30 p.m. In Toronto, the event will be held at the Ministry, on Bay at Grosvenor; Ottawa, at the 75 Alberta St. office.

At issue are government rules requiring all Community Care Access Centres to stop direct service provision and contract out their services.

The OHC has accused the government of tossing cash out the window in its relentless determination to support the business sector.

"Health Minister Witmer is forcing Community Care Access Centres to squander their limited pot of money for patient services. And that public money is now to be used to boost private profits," said Irene Harris, Co-Chair of the Ontario Health Coalition. "This is money lost to our public, not-for-profit system and the provision of services."

In Ottawa, for example, services which have been delivered directly by the Community Care Access Centre are now required to be contracted out. KAYMAR, a for-profit Ottawa based company, won the bid and is slated to take over delivery in April. KAYMAR's contract is up to \$830,000 more per year than it would cost the CCAC to deliver the same services itself.

"These policies are insupportable. On the one hand, the government refuses to adequately fund home care; on the other, it crafts policies allocating precious dollars to the private, for-profit sector. For five long years, the Tories have been hard at work turning our health care system into a cash cow for private companies and the public is paying the bill," said Dan Benedict, OHC Co-Chair.

The OHC is demanding that the government stop forcing CCACs to turn their services over to private, for-profit companies and allow them to deliver the services directly; that it adequately and consistently fund Home Care and ensure adequate staffing. The OHC is also contacting the Auditor General to flag their concern and will ask him to investigate.

"Now we see how the government can report higher spending on health care but the public receive less. Too many people cannot get adequate care, said Harris.

For further information contact: 416-441-2502