



June 19, 2019

For Immediate Release

Attn: Assignment Editor

Ford Government's Health Cuts Negatively Impact Patient Care: Coalition Calls Out Ford Government for “Dissembling” and Lack of Public Accountability

Toronto - In what the Health Coalition has termed a bad news day for Ontario's health care, the Ford government revealed that it has eliminated more than 800 full-time equivalent positions in the LHINs (Local Health Integration Network) and in the six health care agencies (including Cancer Care Ontario, Health Quality Ontario, Trillium Gift of Life, HealthForce Ontario and others) that they eliminated when they created their new “Super Agency”. In addition, almost 300 front-line health care staff providing autism services have been cut at ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development as part of province-wide layoffs of autism care and support workers following the autism funding cuts and restructuring that were implemented in recent months. Also revealed today, a high-risk pregnancy clinic in Windsor will be shuttered. Today's revelations come on the heels of a raft of hospital cuts that have been announced across Ontario in the last few weeks resulting from the Ford government's real dollar budget cuts to Ontario's hospitals, says the Health Coalition.

The Health Coalition takes issue with Doug Ford's Health Minister's claim that the cuts to the health care agencies and LHINs only involve the “back-office”. “We are hearing from health professionals, nurses and unions representing care staff that a number of the LHIN and health agency cuts do directly impact care,” said Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition. “While we never supported the LHINs conducting P.R. and propaganda campaigns using public money to sell health care cuts and policy changes to the public, this announcement is characterized by the same secrecy and dissembling that we have seen over and over from the Ford government. In fact, the health agencies being cut directly impact patient care and could have a huge impact on wait times and access to services. In addition, the cuts at the LHIN include cuts to care staff that impact patient care directly. Today's new autism cuts directly impact services that families with autistic children desperately need and which are a lifeline. The cuts to high-risk pregnancy services and local hospitals directly impact care and services for hundreds of thousands of Ontarians. “

The Ontario Health Coalition is tracking the Ford government's health care cuts on its website: <https://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca/index.php/mounting-health-care-cuts/>. The tally of cuts grows longer virtually every day. “The Ford government promised that they would end hallway medicine; they did not campaign on massive cuts to our health care services. They said would improve mental health care, but instead cut funding by over \$300 million a year. They promised they would not eliminate public sector jobs and health care jobs, but they have been doing just that since last fall, right after they took office,” said Ms. Mehra. The Health Coalition is demanding that the Ford government stop the cuts. But if they fail to do so, they are demanding the government release a full list of all positions they are cutting in every health service in order to make these cuts transparent and publicly accountable. “These are services that are funded by the public with our money and changes in health care policy should not be subject to a disingenuous publicity campaign,” concluded Ms. Mehra.