

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
RELEASE

For Immediate Release
March 4, 2004

Sit-in Sends Message to Smitherman: We Will Fight For Public Hospitals

THURSDAY, MARCH 04, 2004

Hepburn Block, Toronto

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The Liberals are currently betraying their pre-election promises to stop private hospitals (P3s) in ongoing secret deals, investigating at least ten private hospital developments and redevelopments. The Liberals are now maintaining the same communication strategy the Conservatives held, claiming that the P3 hospitals are public. In fact, the government knows full well they are moving ahead with P3-model hospitals, with deep privatization and commercialization throughout

The Ontario Health Coalition has been fighting these deals for three years, fighting their utter secrecy, which we consider to be a public outrage. The public has no information on the scope of the privatization being negotiated or the cost to the public of these P3s. Even the RFP has been kept secret. We have repeatedly requested the government open up the process to the public, and to stop what will become the erosion of our Medicare system.

We have supported our campaign with letters and learned reports showing that P3 hospitals cost the public more, compromise vital services, and siphon money away from patients and into the pockets of corporate executives. We made the P3 deals a critical provincial election issue, and pushed the Liberals to voice clear opposition to the P3s. We were key in the defeat of former Health Minister Tony Clement in Brampton, helping thousands of residents voice their dissent with lawn signs saying Keep Our Hospital Public. In September of 2003 Dalton McGuinty told voters he stands "against the Americanization of our hospitals," and in October said to Ottawa residents "I want a public hospital for our city." The Liberal Health Care Platform states "As the Romanow Commission proved, privatization is a step backward - We will end the Harris-Eves

agenda of creeping privatization."(pp.3) The Ontario Health Coalition asks in return, "how much more do we need to push to stop these deals?"

We have exhausted our democratic means of communicating our public interest in the preservation of Medicare and access to health care based on need not greed. The government's secrecy is completely indefensible.

Today we are at the Ministry of Health to voice our concerns directly, to declare to Hon. Minister Smitherman that our health system is not for sale to private corporations- corporations such as Carillion PLC, with its controversial record of World Record-long wait times, staff and bed cuts, injury and death of workers due to health and safety issues, exorbitant executive salaries and terrible worker pay.

Today we are demanding that the government stop completely the plans to privatize the Brampton and Ottawa hospitals. If we're going to pay for hospitals either way, why not pay less, pay publicly, and maintain public control, ownership, operation and accountability.

The deals that are currently being negotiated behind closed doors will set an irreversible precedent in our health care system that will cost us all economically, but also in the terms of the public good. We are determined to fight to protect public Medicare.

In attendance:

Holly Williams (Nurse)

Danielle Larmond (Nurse)

Pat McNamara (Lab Technician)

Ted Haines (Doctor)

Irving Poirier (Healthcare worker)

Cathy Pounder (Patient)

George MacKenzie (Patient)

Natalie Mehra (Ontario Health Coalition)

Steve Watson (Ontario Health Coalition)

To view our background sheet on Carillion [Click Here](#)

To download our Carillion backgrounder as an MS Word file [Click Here](#)









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