

# Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA  
RELEASE

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## **Health Ministry Sit-In first in escalating campaign to stop private hospitals**

Toronto. On Thursday, March 4th, the Ontario Health Coalition staged a sit-in at the Ministry of Health to send a message to stop the first two private hospitals since the inception of Medicare. The Health Minister's office agreed to more disclosure of documents pertaining to the deals, however did not agree to cancel the deals yet.

With 120 supporters demonstrating outside the building, nine Coalition members entered the Hepburn block with chairs and tents. After an hour and a half, access to the building was cut off, locking doctors, nurses, healthcare workers and patients and a few members of the press inside. Charles Beer, Special Advisor in Minister Smitherman's office, agreed to meet with two representatives. Natalie Mehra and Cathy Pounder brought the OHC's message to the Minister's office; they reported their outrage at the secrecy of the ongoing P3 negotiations and demanded an end to the Brampton and Ottawa private hospital deals. Beer told Mehra and Pounder:

1. The government would disclose its information on the deals today, and the hospitals would disclose their information next week. (He did not commit to disclosing all information; we will review what is disclosed and see what is missing at that time.)
2. He also committed to "broad public consultations" on the government's policy direction regarding private hospitals.
3. He did not agree to halt or end the negotiations of private hospitals, nor did he offer any justification for their continuation.

The public pressure is having some effect. It is forcing some disclosure and will force more; it is forcing a review of the policy, and making the government look more closely at what is becoming a major public debate. We believe that public pressure is necessary to stop the first two private hospitals since the inception of Medicare. It can be done. We've called a mass public rally and march - the biggest demonstration

against the Liberals since this government was elected - on April 3rd starting at Nathan Phillips Square at noon

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