

# Ontario Health Coalition

OHC  
NEWSLETTER  
August 2000



## **OHC welcomes new Coordinator**

We're delighted to announce the appointment of Natalie Mehra as our new Provincial Coordinator who takes over from Lynn Simmons on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

As Executive Director of Epilepsy Kingston, Kingston representative to the Canadian Epilepsy Alliance, Co-Chair of the Kingston Health Coalition, and former Co-Chair of the Kingston Day of Action, Natalie has many years experience in health restructuring issues as well as in community organizing. She has also been an active member of the OHC's Administrative Committee.

Our sincere thanks to the many excellent candidates who applied for this position. We're counting on all member organizations to give our new coordinator as much support as possible. As you'll see from some of what follows, there is much work to be done to secure a quality, not-for-profit, public health care system.

## **Long Term Care Facility bed awards**

The second round of Long Term care facility beds were awarded in late May. It should come as no surprise to learn that the government continues to push its plans for privatization.

Of the 6651 total beds awarded, not-for-profit facilities received 1898 beds (28.5%); hospitals received 474 beds (7.1%), for a total of 2372 non-profit beds (35.7%). For profits received 4279 beds, or 64.3%. A detailed list of beds awards is available at the OHC office. Call us if you'd like a copy mailed to you.

## **Ground-breaking practice at Ottawa CCAC welcome news**

A new "Pre-qualification criterion" established by the Ottawa-Carleton CCAC may provide at least one important defense against privatization and some measure of protection for patients. In its latest Request for Proposal (RFP) covering medical supplies and equipment, the CCAC's new criterion requires that potential contracting agencies "Have no material legal cases pending or within the recent past". To satisfy itself on this score, the RFP asks agencies submitting proposals the following questions:

Within the last five years has the agency or its Predecessor Organization, or any organization with which it is associated within the meaning of the Income Tax Act, or any of its officers or directors:

- been bankrupt or been subject to any other insolvency proceeding;
- been found guilty of any criminal offence; or
- been the subject of any civil proceeding based upon fraud, misrepresentation, criminal conduct or negligence?
- Is the Agency (or any of its officers or directors) presently subject to any such insolvency, criminal or civil proceeding?

The intention of the CCAC is to apply this kind of pre-qualifier to future RFPs covering the larger contracts for nursing and homemaking.

*We would welcome any suggestions you might have for improvements to the scope or wording of the criterion. Make sure to send your name and contact details so that we can follow up with you and keep you posted on new developments.*

*Please also inform us of any firms in the home care field, broadly defined, that could be subject to disqualification under this criterion. Where possible full details and sources should be shared. (We're already aware of Olsten/Gentiva)*

## **Ontario Privacy Act**

A consultation paper on the proposed Ontario Privacy Act was released July 20 by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. The ministry advises that "consultation" sessions are being planned in a number of locations across Ontario and that public meetings at which individuals may address the issues will also be organized.

The privacy consultation paper and questionnaire are available on the ministry web site at [www.mccr.gov.on.ca](#), or you may call them directly at 1-800-268-1142/ 416-326-8555.

In addition to the general consultation on privacy, the Health Ministry will supposedly be consulting on health privacy rules. Contact them for further information 416-327-4300.

**Our Public Health/Private Wealth Hotline is waiting  
to hear from you!**

**Call us with your stories**

**We accept collect calls**

**(416) 441-3713**

**Have you had to pay out of your own pocket for pharmaceuticals, home care services, medical tests, or for services in hospitals or nursing homes? Have you had to pay for any other health care services or gone without because you could not afford the cost? If so, we really want to hear from you.**

**E-mail us or call our Hotline at (416) 441-3713 or Fax us at (416) 441-4073.**

**Mark your calendars!**

**Saturday, October 28/00**

The Ontario Health Coalitions'

## ***Provincial Day of Action on Health Care***

Last year, events took place  
in 21 centres.

**Plan to be part of the action. Organize an event in your  
community.**

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### **Long Term Care Act slated for Fall**

Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer has announced that Long Term Care legislation will be introduced during the fall session. We cannot overstate the importance of this Act and its consequences for all aspects of Long Term Care, including Home and Facility based care. In a letter to Liberal Health Critic Lyn McLeod, Witmer writes, "I also want to assure you that there will be consultations prior to any changes being implemented." "We have no confidence the Tories are planning anything other than their usual phony consultation process with too-tight timelines and no real opportunity for the public to be involved. We're in discussion now about the possibility of supporting shadow consultations and will keep you posted. In the meantime, the House is scheduled to come back September 25 which is the earliest the legislation could be tabled.

### **More news on the CCAC front** > . . .

Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer was the guest speaker at the Ont. Association of Community Care Access Centres Conference held this summer. She told the crowd that she was rethinking the requirement that CCACs divest themselves of all professionals. Apparently, this reconsideration refers to northern and rural CCACs

### **Palliative Care report released**

The Senate sub-committee, chaired by Sharon Carstairs has released its final report "Quality End-of-Life Care: The Right of Every Canadian". A key portion of the report calls for better support for family caregivers. This is welcome news for the thousands of women who are forced to leave their employment to care for an elder relative. As noted in the report, "Quality end-

of-life care must become an entrenched core value of Canada's health care system. Each person is entitled to die in relative comfort, as free as possible from physical, emotional, psychosocial and spir-itual distress. For a full copy, call the OHC.

Public Education Workshops on Privatization ready to roll in the fall

Our Public Health/Private Wealth project has created a fully-packaged community and media event and teaching tool for your organization to use. Two workshops are available: a 1-hour, to be used as part of your meeting; and a 3-hour workshop created as a stand-alone event. The workshops were piloted in July with approximately 10 organizations. Both come complete with a set of facilitator's notes, sample speech, draft media release and other materials needed for your event. If your organization would like to hold a workshop on privatization of Ontario's health care system, call the OHC office. Kits will be ready to be mailed in early Sept

## Burlington United to Save Health Care

Announces

### **Teach-In on CCACs**

**Choose either date:**

**Sat., Nov. 4  
Or Sat. Nov. 11**

**Registration & Coffee at 10 a.m.**

**Program 10:30 C 2:30**

**Burlington Baptist Church**

**2225 New St.**

Come out to this important  
meeting in Burlington on Community Care Access Centres

## **Hear and tell about:**

RFPs Nobody, except Mike Harris, likes them. . . why?

The appeals' charade and Witmer's court action against the  
appeals' board

New Long Term Care Act

Quality vs. Price

What are "members" good for?

Getting information from CCACs

Olsten/Gentiva: What's up?

CBC's "The Cost of Care"

Windsor-Essex tragedy . . . and more

Registration Fee: \$10.00.

Call (905) 681-0242 to register  
and for a map