

October 19, 2026

Ford government must answer for their hospital cuts in Hamilton & Niagara while patients report ‘unconscionable’ waits

Hamilton/Niagara – Patients are suffering lengthy waits and inadequate services while the Ford government [continues to](#) repeatedly [claim](#) that cutting more than 600 hospital staff has no impact on care, a situation that the Ontario Health Coalition called ‘unconscionable’ today. Hospitals across Ontario have been forced into deficit because the Ford government set funding levels that are inadequate to meet their populations’ needs. The government has required the hospitals to find cuts to eliminate deficits. In Hamilton and Niagara, the cuts are extreme by any measure. In context, Ontario’s government funds our hospitals [at the lowest rate of any province](#) and it also funds all our public health care [at the lowest rate](#) in the country.

The Niagara Health System has been putting out [social media](#) and media posts to “correct” what they call false rumours circulating in the communities on the peninsula that the average wait time in the Welland Hospital is 45 hours. In [their own response](#), the hospital reports it takes 15 hours to treat and discharge emergency patients who do not need to be admitted and patients who need admission are waiting literally days – 56 hours – for a bed in Niagara’s overwhelmed hospital system. Yet cuts and closures are moving ahead. In Hamilton, [union and hospital](#) data shows that emergency department wait times for patients that need admission average 24 hours.

Hospital cuts are disclosed mostly through layoff notices. Each full-time equivalent staff position represents 1820 hours of care work per year. Hamilton-Niagara has seen cuts to at least 617 hospital jobs. That total jumps to 757 if you count the closure of the long-term care beds in Welland.

- Hamilton Health Sciences, September 18, 2026, 413 positions, [CHCH](#)
- Hamilton Health Sciences, July 2026, approximately 20 positions, [CHCH](#)
- Niagara Health, November 27, 2025, 98 positions, [Niagara Health](#)
- St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, November 27, 2025, 62 positions, [CHCH](#)
- St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, July 8, 2026, 24 positions, [CHCH](#)
- Niagara Health, February 4, 2026, 140 positions cut from the Welland hospital’s long-term care, [CKTB](#) (the hospital had 115 long-term care beds that are being closed)

“What the Ford government is doing here is unconscionable. These hospitals should not be seeing cuts, they should be seeing major expansions of services to address their overcrowding and long waits,” said Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition. “Instead of fixing hallway medicine as they promised, the Ford government is trying to cover it up. The Ford government’s media speaking lines are “deny, deny, deny”, they passed legislation in May that [blocks public access to information](#) about hospital cut plans, and [cancelled tracking and reporting hallway medicine data](#) a year ago after a series of reports showed it getting worse.”

“Ford must not only answer seriously for these cuts, his government must stop them and start restoring public hospital capacity to levels that are based on reason, evidence, and actual population need for care.”