

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Fraud, criminal conviction, misrepresentation and unlawful user fees:** New report exposes a “Wild West” of for-profit health care in Ottawa private clinics

**Ottawa, March 8, 2024** - A [new report](#) released by the Ottawa and Ontario Health Coalitions contains shocking revelations about the ownership and management behind private health clinics in Ottawa. Based on a five-month investigation, Freedom of Information requests, corporate filings, interviews and court records, the report paints a picture of a dangerous and disturbing “Wild West” of private clinics operating with little or no oversight.

The report centres on the South Keys clinic featured in a flurry of media reports last fall when its “Clinical Director” announced that patients would be required to pay a \$400 annual fee to access primary care by a nurse practitioner. At the time, Health Minister Sylvia Jones promised an investigation, noted the Coalition. No update has been forthcoming and the Health Coalition reports it conducted its own inquiry into the clinic resulting in three major findings, as follows:

1. A review of the two key statutes establishing the legal rights of Ontarians to primary health care services confirms that the \$400 per year fee recently introduced by the South Keys clinic is unlawful. The Coalition called on the Ford government to stop stalling and enforce Ontario’s and Canada’s Public Medicare protection laws. The Coalition called for an investigation into the charges levied on patients, and said that the scope of this investigation must be expanded to examine the ownership and management of the South Keys clinic and another Ottawa clinic co-owned by the same individual.
2. The owners of the South Keys clinic and a second related clinic – Neuromotion Therapy – appear to have been convicted of serious crimes including 64 counts of insurance fraud and sexual assault.
3. The Coalition also identified a troubling pattern of misleading practices in the marketing of these clinics. A number of individual practitioners who are now, or have been, listed on the roster of the clinics’ health professionals appear to live in communities far away from Ottawa, or were listed on the website long after they left, or never worked at the clinics.

The report’s authors concluded, “The details contained in this report reveal the consequences of the Ford government’s policies that have allowed more and more vital health care services to be owned by profit-driven business people and investors who lack a social commitment to the provision of health care.”

“We call upon the Ford government to take immediate action to enforce our public health care laws and stop the South Keys clinic from charging patients for primary care services, at bare minimum,” said Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition.

“The extremely disturbing details about the apparent legal histories of the clinics’ owners illustrate the serious dangers to the public created by the privatization of our vital health care services,” added Kevin Skerrett, of the Ottawa Health Coalition. “Along with actually “shutting down bad actors”, as Minister of Health Sylvia Jones promised in October, this broader problem must be addressed through ending the for-profit privatization of primary care that has accelerated significantly under the Ford government and establishing public and not-for-profit community health teams with strong public oversight.”