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Attn: Assignment Editor

For Immediate Release

## Ford Government's New Home Care Bill "Irredeemable" and Should Not Be Pushed Through During a Pandemic: Coalition Calls for it to be Withdrawn

Toronto -- The Ontario Health Coalition released its submission on Bill 175, the Ford government's new home care law which guts existing home and community care legislation, dismantles public oversight and parcels out currently public home care functions to an array of providers including for-profit companies, according to the Coalition's analysis. Coalition executive director Natalie Mehra will testify before the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly tomorrow, June 16 at 3 p.m. With the release of its submission the Coalition issued the following statement:

"Bill 175 is so misguided and flawed that it is irredeemable. The process by which this Bill was created was profoundly undemocratic. Key advocacy groups, client representatives, workers' and health professionals' representatives were not included in consultations prior to its drafting. The Bill as written reflects the interests and priorities of provider corporations (the majority of which are for-profit) over and against the public interest.

"This Bill was rushed through First and Second Reading in the Legislature in ten business days with very little time for stakeholders to learn about its implications and without adequate time for proper parliamentary debate. Yet the Bill has profound implications. It will result in the wholesale restructuring of home care, the dismantling of much of the existing public governance and oversight, the privatization of existing public and non-profit home care, the creation of a new tier of residential "congregate care", the potential expansion of private for-profit hospitals and the privatization of public hospital care, among other major changes. It repeals significant clauses in existing legislation that protect clients' and the public's interests in home and community care including the Bill of Rights and complaint processes. It does nothing to improve the major problems in home care including poor and inequitable access, missed visits, and staffing shortages. It moves all of the key items of governance and democracy, and of public protection and client protections, to regulations that may or may not ever be written and that can be changed by Cabinet without ever going back to the Legislature. In this way, it takes Ontario's home and community care backward more than 25 years. It would fragment home care and destabilize the workforce, which already suffers from severe staffing shortages.

"There is no justification that would warrant moving forward with this legislation even under normal circumstances. Currently, Ontario is in the midst of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The last thing that is needed in home care, community care and hospitals in Ontario is significant destabilization and more privatization. Given the terrible experience of COVID-19 in long-term care homes and other congregate care settings, and in the for-profit homes in particular, we cannot understand how the government could countenance the expansion of another tier of congregate care without any clarity about the purposes; total permissiveness regarding for-profit privatization; no regulatory, inspections and enforcement system; and no governance regime.

"For all of these reasons, Bill 175 should be withdrawn and a proper consultation process regarding reform of home and community care in the public interest should be undertaken when the pandemic is under control and the context is appropriate."

The Coalition has only twice in more than 20-years found legislation to be so problematic that it should be withdrawn. The Health Coalition represents more than 500,000 Ontarians and more than 400 member organizations. The Coalition's Submission to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and analysis of the Bill are available [here](#).