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Attn: Assignment Editor

For Immediate Release

Province Ignored Repeated Warnings and Evidence Leading to Yesterday's Declaration of "State of Emergency" in Brampton Hospital, Similar Issues Apply Across Ontario

Toronto/Brampton- Following the city's declaration of a health care emergency in Brampton, on the heels of CBC's release of new hospital overcrowding data, the Ontario Health Coalition revealed repeated warnings and reports from the District Health Council, thousands of Brampton residents, the Ontario Health Coalition and other groups showing that the community's hospital capacity is far below population need. The Coalition released the evidence of poor planning in Brampton as a microcosm of what is happening across the province in a report, *Backgrounder on Brampton Hospital Crisis, Warnings and Broken Promises* released today available here:

<https://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca/wp-content/uploads/Backgrounder-on-Brampton-hospital.pdf>

At the provincial level, the Coalition reports, warnings and reports have been issued by the Auditor General, the Fiscal Accountability Office, emergency physicians, paramedics, the Ontario Health Coalition, and health care unions showing that hospital capacity and funding are far below population need. This is certainly the responsibility of previous governments, but it still continues today. By key measures such as emergency department wait times and the duration of critical levels of overcrowding the situation has continued to deteriorate even since the last provincial election.

"The Ford government is blaming previous governments for the hospital crisis even though it set hospital funding in this current year's budget at a rate that does not even meet hospital inflation and population growth," noted Coalition executive director Natalie Mehra. "In several cities and towns across Ontario over the last year we have seen significant hospital bed and staff cuts. These are happening now, even after the election promise to end hallway medicine." For the most recent comparative data on Ontario hospital funding and bed capacity released by the Health Coalition this week see: <https://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca/index.php/ontario-pre-budget-hearing-2020/>

"We are calling for action now, not excuses," she noted. "The province can open hospital wards and floors that have been closed as a result of funding cuts and austerity. They can open Operating Rooms that are closed or underused in hospitals in major towns as a result of inadequate funding. They can start to do this right away. They can improve funding, which is the lowest in the country, right away. Rhetoric about restructuring and further offloading of patients to justify an inhumane policy of continuing to hold hospital capacity far below population need should no longer pass unquestioned."

The Coalition warned that for-profit privatization would worsen the situation and contravenes the values of the vast majority of Ontarians, "The solution is to rebuild capacity in our excellent network of public hospitals and restore sound planning processes," said Ms. Mehra who called upon the province to:

- Commit to increase hospital funding by at least 5.3% as is supported by the evidence, per year.
- Develop an evidence-based capacity plan, through a transparent and accountable public process, to plan for restored public hospital capacity based on need.
- Respond to Brampton's call for the Phase II development of the Peel Memorial site as a full service hospital with inpatient beds as is desperately needed by that community.