

# Ontario Health Coalition

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**Attn: Assignment Editor  
For Immediate Release**

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## **Myth Buster: OHC Challenges Health Minister's Claims**

**Hospital cuts and privatization are not offset by home care**

### **More than 1,000 Ontarians join S.O.S. "Save Our Services" Day of Action events**

(Toronto, Ontario) – The Ontario Health Coalition responded today to the Health Minister's attempt to downplay and minimize the cuts to – and privatization of – hospital services that she and her government are making.

The Minister was responding to the Coalition's report "Austerity Index" listing hospital cuts and privatization across Ontario at [www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca](http://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca). The coalition also held a cross-province "S.O.S" Save Our Services Day of Action yesterday featuring huge crowds encircling local hospitals, holding candlelight vigils, rallies and other demonstrations from Windsor to Ottawa to Sudbury. More than a thousand people joined the S.O.S. events across Ontario.

The coalition notes that not only is the Health Minister covering up the cuts and privatization, she has also fomented these cuts without any proper health planning process and without any democratic process. There has been no legislation introduced to empower the government to dismantle hospital clinical services, no public consultation, no electoral mandate, and no democratic process whatsoever.

"Thousands of surgeries are being cut from our local non-profit hospitals to be privatized to for-profit corporations, or they are simply cut. Hundreds of health professionals, nurses and hospital support staff are being cut along with the services they provide," reports Natalie Mehra, director of the Ontario Health Coalition.

"The Health Minister is trying to cover up the cuts propagated by her government by saying that she is "transforming" the health system, not cutting it. This is patently false," she said. "The cuts and privatization we are seeing now exceed the previous extreme of cuts to and privatization of clinical services that we saw in the mid-1990s."

"This government does not even have a majority. It has no mandate to dismantle our local hospitals, and it certainly should not be doing so by fiat with no democratic process whatsoever," noted Ms. Mehra. "More than a thousand people joined demonstrations and rallies across Ontario yesterday to save our services. We expect Ontario's new Premier to listen to real Ontarians who really know what is happening to services in our hospitals and communities."

In smaller communities, the cuts range from 10% to almost 50% of existing hospital beds slated to be closed down. In larger cities, deficits ranging from \$20 - \$40 million are being reported as hospital funding has been set far below the level required to maintain existing services. Since hospitals are not allowed to run deficits, they are forced to cut needed services to eliminate these deficits.

**For more information: Kim Johnston, Campaign Director 416-441-2502.**