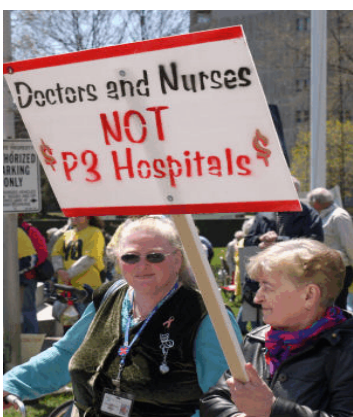


# Pictures from Rally to Save Our Hospitals! Queen's Park, Toronto, April 29



LTC Homes Regulations continued from pg 1...

The Ontario Health Coalition, all of the major seniors' groups, residents' and family groups, unions, nurses and others called for a 3.5 hour minimum care standard to be imposed as an average across Ontario's long term care facilities to begin to bring us into line with the best practices for improving resident care identified in the international research. Then Health Minister George Smitherman agreed to amend Bill 140 to enable the government to implement a minimum care standard.

Since then, in violation of pre-election promises by the Premier and the Health Minister to bring in a minimum care standard, no minimum care standard has been introduced and it is not included in these draft regulations.

The Ministry has created two processes -- one headed by Colleen Sonnenberg to draft regulations and another headed by Shirlee Sharkey. It is not clear how or if these processes will work together. It is clear that both processes are not intended to bring in a minimum care standard. Ontario's long term care sector has been characterized for more than a decade by de-regulation of care standards and reporting to the benefit of the vested interests in the long term care industry, at the expense of residents, their families, and the public interest. Some aspects of deregulation have been reversed by the McGuinty government including the reinstatement of an RN on site 24/7 and the requirement that facilities report their actual staffing levels to the Ministry. However, some further deregulation has occurred under McGuinty. Among regulations removed in the last decade and never reinstated:

- requirement that homes provide a minimum number of hours of care per resident per day. Eliminated by the Harris government. Not reinstated, despite election promises by McGuinty.
- requirement for homes to report on actual staffing levels to the Ministry of Health. Eliminated by the Harris government. Reinstated starting in 2005 by the McGuinty government. However, information on actual staffing levels has been disclosed publicly only after Freedom of Information requests and not all homes are reporting.
- requirement in the Service Agreement to adhere to planned or budgeted levels of staffing. Eliminated by the Harris government. Not reinstated by the McGuinty government.
- requirement that homes increase their average staffing per resident as a condition for eligibility for new funding. Eliminated by the McGuinty government.
- requirement that homes return 50% of the profit they take from "preferred" (private and semi private) accommodation charges to the government. (This is the only funding envelope from which facilities can take profits. So this move effectively doubled the profit taken from each private and semi-private bed.) Eliminated by the Harris government.
- the government has allowed operators to shift costs from the accommodation envelope - making more room for profit. Costs shifted out of this envelope include incontinence supplies, building cameras and surveillance equipment, and accommodation staff. These costs have been moved to the nursing and personal care envelope which is supposed to be directed to daily hands-on care for residents. We do not know when these practices started, but they have been allowed to continue despite the fact that the McGuinty government has been informed about them.

