



## PORTFOLIOS

### Updates on Key Issues

#### Cross Country Actions to Stop Privatization:

##### Report from Ontario

Local health coalition members took to busy street corners and roadsides in early May to show their opposition to two-tiered health care, their rejection of private clinics and solidarity with a massive and historic Quebec march.



A 50,000-person strong May 3<sup>rd</sup> march through downtown Montreal protested the two-tier privatization and for-profit clinics that are proliferating in Quebec. In an unprecedented call for solidarity, Quebec

organizers asked health coalitions across the country to hold actions on the same day. In Ontario there were ten cities which responded to the call by asking busy rush hour traffic to "slam the brakes on privatization" and "honk for health care".

The response was incredible. As the Peterborough Examiner pointed out- there was lots of honking but support for public health care and not bad driving was the cause. The actions served as a rallying point against the proliferation of private clinics, P3 hospitals and the cuts to services that goes hand in hand with privatization. Ontario actions took place in London, Peterborough, Guelph, Windsor, Kingston, Toronto, Ottawa, Sudbury and Brampton.

##### Hospital Budget Cuts

In Ajax, more than 700 people participated in a march to save services at the Rouge Valley Health Centre to protest plans to move mental health beds and other necessary services out of the facility to balance the budget.

Hospitals across Ontario are facing service cuts or rationalization to balance their budgets, though details are unknown as many are still in negotiations with their LHINs. The Ontario Health Coalition released a "Hospital Hot Spots" Map and media information in the lead-up to budget day. They are available on our website at [www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca](http://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca). Watch for further actions and events to protect local hospital services as information becomes available.

#### Long Term Care: New OHC Report Underlines Need for 3.5 Hr.Care Standard

*It should not be expected that seniors are engaged in the act of dying. Instead, we should be supported in life-giving, loving environments where we can live life to the fullest until life ends."(Resident, Mississauga, 2007)*

This month, the OHC released a new report "Violence, Insufficient Care, and Downloading of Heavy Care Patients: An Evaluation of Increasing Need and Inadequate Standards in Ontario's nursing homes". The report was conducted in

*continued >>*

## Cross Province Hearings on Homecare Reform

The OHC is launching a set of cross-province hearings into homecare reform across Ontario to receive input from a wide range of stakeholders (patients/clients, family members, seniors and advocacy groups, volunteers, providers, workers, interested residents, CCACs, academic community) on the future of the homecare system and what changes or reforms are necessary to make it work for Ontarians.

These hearings will travel to different regions of the province from June 9 to 16, 2008 with three eminent panelists receiving oral and/or written submissions on the homecare system. We will be seeking input and reporting on:

- What we want to achieve with Ontario's homecare system.
- What values should underlie our homecare system.
- Benefits and challenges of the current system.
- Proposals for reform: access, funding, delivery, integration, processes, standards, and more.

##### Panelists

Carol Kushner – health policy analyst and author  
Pat Baranek – health services and policy consultant and author

Marion Dewar – former mayor of Ottawa, representing seniors

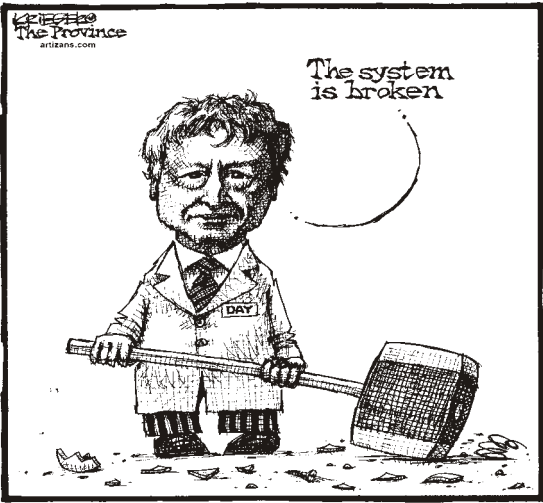
The panel represent a non-partisan approach, with credible policy knowledge. Together they will come up with an independent report on the findings of the hearings and recommendations for reform. The people and groups making submissions to the hearings are invited to base their submissions on a set of discussion items and questions contained in this package. The hearings are not limited: anyone wishing to make a submission is welcome. Written submissions alongside oral presentations are encouraged, and written submissions without oral presentations are accepted.

##### Sponsoring Organizations

These hearings are being organized by the Ontario Health Coalition and funded by SEIU Local 1 Canada. They are endorsed by: Canadian Pensioners Concerned, Toronto Health Coalition, Older Women's Network, CareWatch-Toronto, Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations, Alliance of Seniors/Older Canadians Network, Ontario Federation of Union Retirees, Congress of Union Retirees Canada, SOAR, ARM Chapter 12- Toronto (Retired Secondary School Teachers).

##### Invitation to Make Submissions

We hope that you will become a part of this exciting process by either making a *cont'd >>*



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## Homecare Update: Ontario demands an end to Competitive Bidding



OHC Town Hall Meetings on homecare were held across Ontario this month with a briefing and presentation and interesting question and answer sessions. Participants took thousands of post cards to be delivered to Premier Dalton McGuinty. You can download the postcard at

[www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca](http://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca)

**Kingston:** Town Hall meetings across the province kick off with more than 50 people at the Kingston Public Library in an event coordinated by nursing student Jamie Masse.

**Guelph:** A blizzard did not stop 50 people from attending this town hall meeting at a local seniors home.

**Peterborough:** Hundreds of postcards are distributed to be send back to the Premier with a clear message of rejection to competitive bidding at this meeting attended by more than 50 people.

**Toronto:** More than 100 people representing Ontario's major seniors' organizations packed a committee room in the legislature at Queen's Park and all three parties were forced to take note of the anger around competitive bidding.

**Sarnia:** As the campaign gathers steam the message is clear in Sarnia- end competitive bidding and institute a public and well supported home care system.

**Cornwall:** Local media pick up the story and representatives of the for-profit companies came out to hear our side of the story at this lively gathering.

**Brockville:** Lots of Red Cross homecare workers joined community members to join the campaign.

**Burlington:** One person, perhaps from a for-profit company, tried to argue with a room full of people who know the devastation privatization has brought and are having none of it.

**Sudbury:** A lively crowd comes out to add their voices to the campaign.

**London:** A full room at the local library heralded this meeting. Participants left with a plan to go straight to their local MPP's and the Premier with a clear message of rejection of competitive bidding.

**Midland:** A regular meeting of the local coalition focuses on home care and action.

**North Bay:** Local nurses gathered at the library, led by homecare workers who gratefully agreed to add their voices to the postcards and calls pouring into the Premiers office.

**Port Elgin:** A large gathering, including local VON workers and interested community members joined forces to take action to end to for-profit privatization.

## Long Term Care cont'd...

consultation with seniors' groups, nurses' organizations, physicians, community coalitions, unions, members of residents' and families' councils. It includes new information about reported staffing levels revealed in a Freedom of Information request. Among the key findings:

- ▶ Ontario has the second worst overall staffing levels in Canada (BC has the lowest)
- ▶ Resident acuity has increased almost 30% since 1992
- ▶ Ontario's direct care staffing levels have remained stagnant since 2005, despite large infusions of funding (the government has increased funding for the long term care homes sector by almost \$800 million since 2003.)

The coalition renewed calls for a minimum average care standard of 3.5 hours of direct hands-on care to be brought in by regulation under the new Long Term Care Homes Act. The report's release coincided with the delivery of Shirlee Sharkey's report to the government on human resources and long term care homes. Sharkey's report was received by the government but has not been released publicly. Full report at [www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca](http://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca)

## Homecare, cont'd from pp. 1....

presentation at one of the hearings or submitting a written report.

For a one-page logistics background and the consultation document please go to our website at [www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca](http://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca) .If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you wish to register for one of the hearings please contact us before the end of the day on Friday May 30th at: [homecare.reform@gmail.com](mailto:homecare.reform@gmail.com) or call 416-441-3713 with your full name, contact information, organizational affiliation (if any) and which hearing you would like to attend (please see list below). We will be calling you the next week to schedule your presentation. Written submissions must no more than ten (10) pages and must be received by Friday June 20<sup>th</sup> at [homecare.reform@gmail.com](mailto:homecare.reform@gmail.com)

### Hearing Dates and Locations

Monday, June 9 – Toronto

Tuesday, June 10 – Sarnia (including Lambton )

Wednesday, June 11 – Peterborough (including Kawarthas, Durham)

Thursday, June 12 – Ottawa

Monday, June 16 – Thunder Bay

## A Care Standard, Or Not? Minister Responds to OHC

*excerpt from Rob Furguson's article in The Toronto Star, May 9*

Concerns that care in nursing homes is not improving despite huge funding increases have Health Minister George Smitherman acknowledging tougher controls are necessary. "It's prudent to look for every opportunity to make sure that when the government invests a dollar for an intended purpose, that it gets spent on that purpose," Smitherman said yesterday.

He was responding to a new Ontario Health Coalition study using ministry data that found care in nursing homes has been "stagnant" at 2.85 hours per resident for three years. "There's no accountability to make sure funding actually goes to increased care," coalition president Natalie Mehra told a news conference on the report. NDP health critic France Gélinas called that a "breakdown" considering the Liberals have boosted spending on long-term care to \$3 billion a year, up 52 per cent since they took power in 2003.

Smitherman confirmed his officials are working on ways to measure how hours of care the ministry pays for compare with actual hours of care delivered to residents.

Nursing homes, slated to get another \$600 million in funding over the next three years, have increasingly become a hot issue in Ontario politics. The *Star* has revealed two recent accidental deaths at an east-end Toronto nursing home, and critics say staff in nursing homes are overworked without enough time to properly care for residents. Some residents have been left in wet diapers for hours because there aren't enough nurses and personal support workers to take them to the bathroom. The latest death at Leisureworld Caregiving Centre on O'Connor Dr. saw resident Wally Baker die after a fall from an automated lift that is used to move people from beds to chairs. Baker's death April 30 came three days after fellow resident Florence Coxon strangled on a strap holding her in a wheelchair. The coroner's office is investigating both deaths.

"There are real problems in our nursing homes and our homes for the aged because we simply are not providing an adequate level of care," said NDP Leader Howard Hampton. Smitherman said another 1,200 registered practical nurses and 800 personal support workers will be added to nursing homes this year as the government pushes to its goal of providing 3.25 hours a day of care by 2011. The Ontario Health Coalition is pushing for 3.5 hours.