

Community Connections

Spring 2019

For OPSEU members working in Sector 17,
Community Health Care Professionals



Message from the President



We have had a year of Doug Ford and so far it has been a disaster for Ontario on so many levels.

His attempts at improving our health care situation have made a bad situation even worse.

The Local Health Integration Networks were far from perfect, but the new so-called super agency will remove any accountability and transparency.

It opens the door to privatization of our health care system and will hurt patients in the end.

The Financial Accountability Office's latest figures revealed that Ontario invests less per person in health care than any other province – \$3,900 per person compared to the Canadian average of \$4,300 per person. This underfunding has pushed our health care system and valuable workers to a breaking point.

Frontline employees are overworked, threatened by violence and harassment in the workplace, and provided little support to deal with the increasing complexity of their patients' needs.

To add insult to injury, earlier this month the government also introduced a bill to cap wage increases at one per cent, OPSEU will not stand for it.

This government needs a serious wakeup call before more staff and patients fall by the wayside. Ford and his Minister of Health and Long-Term Care need to significantly rethink their health care restructuring plans. We need a leader who isn't just talking about being "for the people" but someone who is actually listening to the people.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warren Thomas".

Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President, Ontario Public Service Employees Union



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TOGETHER TO WIN Uniting for a fair Ontario



As the Ford government aggressively pushes through its destructive agenda, we must ask ourselves: what kind of Ontario do we want? Thanks to Ford and his “Progressive” Conservatives, Ontario is actually regressing. Our public services are increasingly endangered and this government has already taken away some workers’ rights, for which we have fought so hard over the years.

We will not accept this! That’s why we have launched this campaign called “Together to Win – Uniting for a fair Ontario”. It will be up to

every one of us to get involved to raise awareness, in every corner of the province, about how Ontario is suffering under the Ford government’s ill-conceived plans. Come join us as we strengthen our alliances with other labour unions and community organizations and stand in solidarity to fight back against Ford and his regressive policies! Together, we will win an Ontario that is fair for all!

Bill 74: The People’s Health Care Act, 2019 - Restructuring Ontario’s Health Care System

On Tuesday, February 26, 2019 Ontario Health Minister Christine Elliott announced the government’s plans to overhaul Ontario’s healthcare system. This overhaul is centered on dissolving the current Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) system, and replacing it with a single “super agency”, which has been named Ontario Health.

Ontario Health will replace the 14 LHINs as well as the following agencies:

- Cancer Care Ontario
- eHealth Ontario
- Trillium Gift of Life Network
- Health Shared Services
- Health Quality Ontario
- HealthForce Ontario Marketing and Recruitment Agency

Vast Powers

The new legislation places Ontario Health at the centre of Ontario’s health care system. It’s CEO and board of directors are responsible for directing service delivery and managing funding to service providers. The Minister of Health has the power to force hospitals and other health care providers to integrate, merge or close – without consultation.

Integrated Service Delivery

Minister Elliott emphasized throughout her announcement that this reform is designed to be patient-focused. According to Elliott, the healthcare system has become “locked in siloes” and that care is fragmented, which results in gaps in care continuity, such as when patients are transitioning from hospitals to homecare. “Efforts... are dispersed and diluted across a system that competes for, rather than realizes the value of, every healthcare dollar.”

Ontario Health Teams

The model the government proposed emphasizes a local and community-based approach, which takes the form of local Ontario Health Teams. These teams are made up of local healthcare providers, and are responsible for overseeing smooth transitions between different types of care. There are increased use of “digital tools” to provide care. This includes the ability to access medical records and make appointments online and speaking with health care providers online. The government is asking hospitals, long-term care providers, mental health agencies and other health care providers to voluntarily form “teams” to provide integrated care in a particular region. The Ministry of Health and Long-





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Term Care will evaluate and assess the readiness of these “teams” to provide the integrated care model the government is envisioning. If approved, each “team” will be provided with funding from Ontario Health and set up with financial and health care outcomes to provide care within a particular geographic region. The MOHLTC is hoping to have several of these teams up and running by the summer of 2019. In time, the expectation is this model will cover the majority of the province.

Still so many questions

Will there be job losses as the LHINs and other agencies are folded into Ontario Health?

Will this new model open the door for more for-profit service providers to get involved in health care?

How will funding be allocated to these Ontario Health Teams if they are comprised of multiple service providers / health care entities?

What happens if service providers do not voluntarily organize themselves into “teams”?

What will be the implications of this restructuring on health care funding in Ontario?

Bill 74 is a deeply flawed and dangerous piece of legislation. It is ill-conceived, full of gaps and most distressingly, it rejects the fundamental principles of Ontario’s public health care system.

The creation of Ontario Health, its regional agencies and Health Teams would mean more bureaucracy and even less accountability to Ontarians, as power is centralized in a top-down approach to decision-making. The endless pursuit of restructuring will divert billions of dollars away from frontline care and result in even deeper cuts and privatization that will harm patients and communities.

OPSEU is following this legislation very closely and are constantly updating us about the changes. Be sure to keep your eyes posted on any OPSEU Press releases and join in any local actions related to Health Care.



With Bill 74, the People’s Health Care Act, 2019, the Ford government has created a new super health care agency called Ontario Health. The bill dissolves Ontario’s 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) and merging their duties with those of six other health care agencies, including Cancer Care Ontario, eHealth Ontario and Trillium Gift of Life Network.

This massive restructuring affects approximately 10,500 workers, many of them represented by OPSEU. The union and its members have a large number of significant concerns, particularly when it comes to layoffs, privatization, governance, and preserving workplace rights achieved over many years through collective bargaining.

When the Harris Tories restructured hospitals in the 1990s, they created confusion and chaos at a huge cost to Ontario taxpayers: \$3.9-billion versus just \$800 million in “savings.” As frontline workers, we can’t afford to let a new batch of Conservatives take up where the previous Conservatives left off in destroying our health care system -so their rich private-sector pals can get their hands on public dollars through for-profit health care.

With over 600 OPSEU members in 5 different LHINS, a solidarity campaign was created where members were encouraged to participate in solidarity blue Wednesdays, wearing stickers that asked their employers “where do we go from here?” In additions to this members were asked to email their MPPs urging them to speak-up against the mess this super agency would make.





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Central
East
-Therapists



North Bay



NSM local President
Cathy Parsons
representing the
Huntsville branch



Brantford





Who's in Bargaining?

Local	Contract Name
152	Elgin St. Thomas Public Health
169	Corporation of the County of Huron Health Unit
269	Victorian Order of Nurses - Niagara
276	Grey Bruce Health Unit - Pro-Tech
289	Victorian Order of Nurses - Grey Bruce
289	Victorian Order of Nurses - Grey Bruce - Part-time only
490	The Eastern Ontario Health Unit
4101	Eastern Ottawa Community Family Health Team/l'Equipe de sante familiale communautaire de l'est d'Ottawa
4106	Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph of Hotel Dieu of Kingston Weeneebayko Patient Services



Welcome New Units

Saint Elizabeth Health Care (Clarington)

Paramed Home Health Care (Barrie)





Thousands gathered

at Queen's Park on April 30th to oppose the Ford government's upcoming cuts privatization and mega-mergers of our public health care system.

OPSEU members came out in force to march in solidarity with dozens of health care coalitions, labour groups, community activists, and every day patients and advocates from across the province.

We were there to send Ford a strong message that our public health care isn't for sale and that he needs to stop putting profits before people.

Even though Ford promised that there would be no layoffs in the public sector, specifically on the frontline, it's precisely those workers who are seeing the ugly reality of cuts from the recent announcements of the elimination of the LHINs and the downsizing of our public health units.

Health care restructuring and privatization means huge costs, less services, and poorer outcomes for patient care.

OPSEU will keep up the pressure and fight to keep our health care public!



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A message from the Treasurer!!

Please send in your sector dues cheque!!

Please email: **Elaine Giles - S17 Treasurer** elainegiles@hotmail.com for details.

The bylaws state the following:

- 9.1 Division Membership fees shall come from local rebates. Division Membership fees shall only be set or changed at a Division Meeting by a two-thirds vote of the Delegates.
- 9.2 Division Membership Fees become due on the 2nd of January every second year.
- 9.3 Memberships dues for Sector 17 will read \$2.00 per member per year.



Authorized for distribution

Warren (Smokey) Thomas
OPSEU President

