



dialogue

July 27, 2006

A bi-weekly update on issues affecting health care in Ontario

Web sites to keep an eye on

Canadian Doctors for Medicare
<http://www.canadiandoctorsformedicare.ca/>

Medical Reform Group
<http://www.hwcn.org/link/mrg/>

Ministry dismisses outspoken LHN board member

4

If the newly appointed LHINs board members felt they had any real input into their regional health care, they may need to think twice before getting out of lockstep with their colleagues. The Ministry of Health recently dismissed Mary Kwong Lee from the St. Clair LHIN Board.

Lee is an experienced nurse, a long-term member of Chatham's municipal council, and had previously run for the Mayor's chair.

Gary Switzer, chair of the Erie-St.Clair LHIN, initially told the media that Lee's removal was a ministry decision, but the *Chatham Daily News* reports that the Erie-St. Clair LHIN board had, in fact, requested Lee's removal.

"I guess I asked too many questions," Lee told the *News*. She said she had issues with the operation of the board, its composition, accountability, and power of the chairperson.

While Lee's dismissal raised eye brows locally, David Spencer, press secretary to George Smitherman, said that Lee's appointment was not the first to be rescinded.

Contact your doctor to urge the CMA's support of Medicare

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) is choosing between a pro-privatization and pro-Medicare presidential candidate at their Charlottetown meeting August 22nd.

President-elect Dr. Brian Day is an outspoken advocate for privatizing public health care services, and has argued for repealing the Canada Health Act. Canadian Doctors For Medicare are supporting a challenge from the convention floor from Dr. Jack Burak, a family physician from British Columbia. The outcome will shape the future direction of the CMA, which represents 60,000 doctors across Canada.

The National Union is asking members to urge their doctor to take a stand alongside their patients to preserve and improve equitable public health care for all Canadians.

Technologists face layoff in Clarington

Local 348 president Leslie Sanders says Lakeridge Health plans to eliminate four technologist positions at the Bowmanville Hospital, reducing local services.

Outpatients needing x-ray and ultrasound examinations in Clarington will likely be referred to a private clinic.

"This amounts to privatization by stealth," said Sanders. "By cutting these services in the hospital, Lakeridge is effectively moving this work to another entity."

OPSEU has warned that hospitals will likely make such cuts in advance of the LHINs, preferring to choose which services will be delivered at their multi-site facilities.

"LHINs are supposed to be a breath of fresh air in health care... In Chatham-Kent, we have a health alliance that issues guidelines to its sitting board members to walk in lockstep with the chairperson, don't talk publicly unless authorized to, and don't dare speak out against the board or the alliance. In short, "please don't bring an opinion. We already have one for you."

- Editorial, Chatham Daily News, July 12, 2006

CBS Call Centre Joins OPSEU

More than 200 employees of the Canadian Blood Services National Contact Centre in Sudbury voted to join OPSEU July 11.

OPSEU represents more than 1,000 CBS employees across the province, including technologists, support unit, and plasma workers.