

dialogue

October 18, 2007

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

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ER added to wait times strategy

Dalton McGuinty announced Oct. 12 that the government is adding emergency room care to its wait times strategy.

Dr. Alan Hudson, who led the government's efforts to reduce wait times for cardiac care, cancer care, cataract surgery as well as hip and knee replacements, will once again head up the effort.

The effort will begin by measuring and reporting how long ER wait times presently are in Ontario hospitals. The government will then set targets and "give hospitals the supports and tools they need to achieve success." No specific funding was part of the announcement.

Ontario emergency rooms receive 5 million visits per year.

Public against for-profit delivery of home care services

In a September Vector Poll, 81 per cent of respondents said the government has a moral responsibility to provide home care without profit. The competitive bidding system of awarding home care contracts is likely to restart soon, opening the door to further for-profit delivery of home care services. The Vector poll was conducted August 27 to Sept. 10, with 1,121 adults participating across Canada. The Ontario portion involved 511 respondents, with a sampling error of 4.3 per cent.

October 6 OPSEU Locals 206, 273, and 269 placed an ad in the Hamilton Spectator. Four days before the election, the ad questioned where the evidence was to justify the ongoing privatization of health care service delivery.



OHC/OFL Health Care Conferences

The Ontario Health Coalition is holding its annual action assembly on Saturday, November 3rd in Toronto. The assembly is a chance for members of the regional health coalitions to provide input into the planning process for the upcoming year.

The day before the action assembly the OHC will be holding a one-day conference: Revisioning Public Health Care. The aim of the conference is to provide an opportunity for community activists, practitioners, academics, and frontline medical service workers to forge a new vision for how to improve our health system. Speakers include social activist Judy Rebick, Adriana Tetley from the Association of Ontario Health Centres, and lawyer Steven Shrybman.

The Ontario Federation of Labour is holding a health care forum prior to their convention November 24th. Beginning at noon, the forum will

look at the impact of market-based reforms in Great Britain. Components will share their own stories about how user fees, privatization and contracting out are changing the face of Ontario's health system.

Some funding is available to attend these events. Please contact Rick Janson if you are interested in participating.

- **Revisioning Public Health Care** / Friday, November 2 beginning at 9am—Oakham House, Ryerson University, 63 Gould St., Toronto
- **OHC Action Assembly** / Saturday, November 3, beginning at 9am—St. Vladimir Institute, 675 Spadina Ave., Toronto
- **OFL Health Care Forum** / Saturday, November 24, 12 Noon to 5 pm, Sheraton Centre, 123 Queen St. W., Toronto