

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: New Long Term Care Homes Act Update; P3 Update; Cross-Province Tour Against Privatization Update; Municipal Elections Update; Quebec's Bill 33, and; Upcoming Activities.

New Long Term Care Homes Act Update

The Ontario government introduced the new long term care homes legislation in the fall. It went to hearings in the middle of January in four communities only: Toronto, Sudbury, London, and Kingston. Dozens of OHC members and member groups made presentations at the hearings. In addition, rocking chair rallies for care standards were organized outside the hearings in Kingston and Sudbury. Our brief can be found at www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca

For-Profits Campaign for Money Without Strings

The for-profit nursing homes, represented by their lobby group the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA) have mounted a campaign of their own on the new act. They have focussed on achieving less controls and more money. The OLTCA is opposing a new regime requiring that homes which are not up to standards to renovate or not have their licenses renewed. It is also opposing new "paperwork" requirements, even though the increased paperwork is in-depth assessments of residents to better capture their care needs (including those with dementia or cognitive impairment) and will result in a better assessment of the acuity of residents. The health coalition is supporting the move to increase regulation and improve assessment of residents. We have issued a memo on the campaign of the for-profit homes. It is available on our website at www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca

Coalition Wins Major Roll-Backs on the P3s: But Still More to Do

We have reviewed in-depth the P3 hospital tenders released to date. Of one dozen hospitals that have started the tendering process, all but three are short-term finance-build projects.

This means that for most of the hospitals there is no privatization of lands, services, management, assets or operations. The construction company or financier will pay up front to build the hospital. When the building is substantially completed they will be paid out by the hospital and their role is done. The difference between this and a traditional building is simply that the government and hospital hold back payment until the building is substantially completed in an attempt to assure that construction deadlines and met. The costs of these hospitals will still likely be higher.

There are three hospitals that still include long-term privatization of financing, services and land. These are in **Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay** and **Niagara (St. Catharines)**. The Ministry of Health has issued a directive to all hospitals to limit the services that can be privatized in the P3 deals to disallow privatization of dietary, laundry, cleaning and other "soft" services in the P3 deals.

Bottom line: Most of the new hospitals contain only short term private financing. Three contain long term deals and service privatization. Even in these three, privatization is severely curtailed. We will be issuing a full report shortly.



Seniors from the Kingston Health Coalition Rally for a Minimum Average Care Standard Outside the Hearings for the new Long Term Care Homes Act in Kingston.

Dates to Watch:

January 30 & 31 – The new Long Term Care Homes Act goes to clause-by-clause reading at the committee. This means that the committee will vote on proposed amendments. After this, the Bill goes back to the legislature for 3rd (final) reading and passage.

February 8 & 9 – Federal, Provincial and Territorial Health Ministers will be meeting in Toronto on federal health minister Tony Clement's "Wait Time Guarantees". (Note: you can't have a wait times guarantee unless you have a parallel private system to refer patients to if deadlines are not met. This is not about improving care, it is a Harper government privatization scam.) The OHC will be holding protests outside the meetings. For more details, please call 416-441-2502.

March 19 – The Ontario Legislature will reconvene.

Late February - March – OHC Tour and Consultation on protecting services in rural and small hospitals. Also upcoming: big and small town tour on the new threat of privatization through competitive bidding in hospitals and "integration" of community agencies.

National Health Care News

Two Tier Clinics Bill Passes in Quebec

Quebec's right-wing Charest government has passed Bill 33, ushering in for-profit two-tier health care by legislation for the first time anywhere in Canada since the inception of Medicare. The Bill creates centralized coordinated waiting lists to improve timely access to care. However, it also does the following:

- it legalizes private hospitals and clinics
- it creates a legal framework for for-profit clinics and doctors offices to obtain exclusive 5 year contracts with hospitals for certain services, privatizing the delivery of public services
- it establishes legal two-tier hip and knee and cataract surgery clinics where doctors will charge patients out-of-pocket fees to jump the queue
- it allows the list of two-tier services to be expanded without debate in the legislature, simply by committee

We will keep you updated on this issue.

CanWest Media Wants Drug Advertising Money

CanWest Mediaworks has launched a charter challenge against Health Canada to protest the ban on direct-to-consumer drug advertising in Canada. CanWest merged recently with the Global media empire, and now includes Global TV, the Financial Post, the Ottawa Citizen, the Vancouver Sun etc. CanWest wants to be allowed to sell advertising to drug companies, similar to the situation in the United States. This type of advertising is considered a problem because it feeds demand for drugs that provide little if any therapeutic benefit. The Canadian Health Coalition is intervening in the challenge. Barbara Mintzes, University of British Columbia's Centre for Health Services and Policy Research, is stunned by the decision and has written and researched extensively the effect of such advertisements on viewers attitudes to health and wellness. To listen to an interview go to www.healthcoalition.ca and click on the link under the CanWest Mediaworks Charter Challenge heading.

Consultations on Retirement Homes

In December, Minister for Seniors Jim Bradley announced consultations on Retirement Homes. A background document and questionnaire are online at www.rhconsultations.ca. The consultations will be as follows:

Sudbury - January 30
 Thunder Bay - February 1
 Windsor - February 6
 London - February 7
 Kitchener-Waterloo - February 8
 Toronto - February 12
 St. Catharines - February 14
 Hamilton - February 15
 Ottawa - February 21 (en francais aussi)
 Kingston - February 22
 Barrie - February 28
 Brampton/Peel - March 2

The OHC will send out more information by email as soon as possible. If you are not on our email list, you can also call us for more information at 416-441-2502.

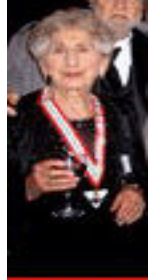
Update on Kingston 2-Tier Clinic

We have made a complaint to the provincial government about the 2 Tier clinic that has come to light in Kingston. The government has sent in investigators. We will update on this issue in the next newsletter.

Bea Levis Awarded the Order of Ontario

Long time OHC Board member Bea Levis was awarded the Order of Ontario in a ceremony before Christmas.

Bea has been actively involved in many organizations including: Care Watch, Older Women's Network and the Ontario Health Coalition. Bea is well-loved and highly respected for her constructive input, excellent politics and exceptional community commitment. Congratulations Bea!



Health Coalition Members Elected In Municipal Elections

Our warm congratulations to the following health coalition members who were elected or re-elected to municipal councils in the November elections. If we missed someone from your coalition, please accept our apologies and do let us know!



Helen Havelik, elected to Petrolia Council, shown here as she was given an award for exceptional community engagement at the OHC's Annual Assembly held last October.

Cornwall Health Coalition

Elaine MacDonald - Cornwall Council

Kingston Health Coalition

Rob Hutchison - Kingston Council

Steve Garrison - Kingston Council

Niagara Health Coalition

Malcolm Allen - Pelham County Council

Jeff Burch - St. Catharines Council

Shawn Wilson - Thorold Council

Sarnia Health Coalition

Helen Havelik - Petrolia

Anne Marie Gillis - Sarnia City Council and

Lambton County Council

Thunder Bay Health Coalition

Andy Savela - Thunder Bay Council

Waterloo Region Health Coalition

Pam Wolf - Cambridge Council