



The Right Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau  
The Honourable Chrystia Freeland  
House of Commons, Canada

January 24, 2023

**OPEN LETTER RE: Ontario's Health System at Risk**

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Deputy Prime Minister Freeland,

As Ontario's largest health care unions, CUPE, SEIU Healthcare, OPSEU/SEFPO, ONA, and Unifor, we write on behalf of 295,000 workers concerned that Premier Ford's privatization plan is putting our members and the people they care for at risk.

In recent years Premier Ford has attacked our members in a number of destructive ways. First, unconstitutionally infringing on their right to freely bargain a collective agreement; and second, underfunding the health care system by reallocating federal transfers intended to support public services during the pandemic.


We are now alarmed that Ontario's public health care system is at further risk because of the PC government's scheme to support American-style, private for-profit hospitals throughout the province. Funding private clinics will further damage the ability of Ontario's public hospitals to provide high-quality care and make it even more challenging to retain front-line staff. It's a dangerous plan that will undermine safe staffing levels and universal access to care.


Ontario's Minister of Health admitted in a recent interview that more options will be available to those able to pay the cost. The very definition of two-tier health care is when the wealthy have special access to services and products that others cannot afford. Denying people access is about the pursuit of profits, as exemplified by the often cited but poorly understood private hospital profiteer, Shouldice, known for refusing service to people with complex or pre-existing conditions.

Further, our concerns are borne from evidence in the broken long-term care sector, where outcomes for people are objectively worse when delivered by for-profit nursing home chains. We should not double-down on a system that diverts taxpayer funds to corporations that prioritize dividend payouts despite the suffering of seniors in care.

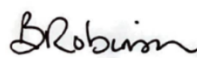
As your cabinet meets this week in Hamilton, we urge you to consider what's at risk as you negotiate Canada Health Transfers with First Ministers like Premier Ford, whose plan includes expanding private surgeries and diagnostics and lacks a credible solution to the health human resource crisis. In the end, Canadians will wait longer under privatized health care and pay more.


Sincerely,

  
Michael Hurley  
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Sharleen Stewart  
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