



# Provincial Election 2007



## Health Care Understaffing

Right now, in emergency services, hospitals, nursing homes, homes for the aged, retirement homes, public health units, mental health and home care units, workers can not deliver quality care. There just aren't enough of them to do it.

We all know what the previous Conservative government did to hospitals and other health care facilities in Ontario. But what about the current one? The Liberal government has made plenty of health care funding announcements. But have their latest commitments really made a difference to patient care?

Dalton McGuinty promised to hire 8,000 new, full-time nurses over the course of its mandate. To date, it has certainly hired some – but demanded balanced budgets from the province's hospitals, which has caused lay-offs. The net balance is not encouraging. And over the next four years it is expected that another 20,000 RNs will retire.

In the Spring of 2005 the Ontario Federation of Labour held 17 meetings across Ontario with health care workers from all sectors. This resulted in a report entitled *Understaffed and Under Pressure – A Reality Check by Ontario Health Care Workers* – a report which was mailed to all MPPs.

Workers came to mutual conclusions that all sectors and workplaces have been hard hit by understaffing. The problems associated with understaffing, and its consequences, are systematic and serious. Workers feel that they are not listened to by government when they call for increased resources to do the tasks they know should be done. These tasks become less and less doable in the time and resources allotted. The quality and level of needed services deteriorates for Ontarians in need. This is an unacceptable situation for all Ontarians.

### **The OFL Report Called for:**

- an immediate moratorium of layoffs in hospitals;
- a required minimum standard of 3.5 hours per day of nursing and personal care for residents in nursing homes and homes for the aged. In 1996, the Conservative government had repealed an earlier standard of 2.25 hours;

- a required minimum standard for staffing with an appropriate complement of full-time workers in all health care sectors.

During the legislative process dealing with the *Long-Term Care Act* (Bill 140) the Liberal government, while acknowledging that the legislation did not address the need for staffing standards, promised that health care unions would be fully involved in the process of developing regulations to deal with this issue. This has not happened.

**Ask your Local Candidates:**

Will you and your party publicly support a required minimum staffing standard of 3.5 hours per day of nursing and personal care for residents in nursing homes and homes for the aged in our community?

Will you and your party publicly support developing minimum staffing standards for other health care sectors?