

Women have a lot at stake in what happens to health care in Ontario. Women are the majority of health care receivers and health care providers in the province. Approximately 80% of paid healthcare workers are women and women provide most of the unpaid health care in our homes. There can be no health care without people. The Ontario government must immediately and significantly increase staffing numbers in all sectors in order to address existing shortages and the consequences of the pending retirement of thousands of health care workers.

The implementation of a health care tax in Premier McGuinty's budget brought in billions of extra dollars. What is not clear is how much positive change these billions have really brought. The Liberals have been quietly restructuring our health care system and turning some service delivery into a big competition. As plans are likely to unfold in a much bigger way after the next election, the number and type of local services at risk is unclear, but given the current trends, we should be very concerned.

### **Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:**

- Continued their own brand of the Conservative privatization of hospitals, saying it is efficient and saves taxpayers' money. But as the Brampton Hospital P3 nears completion, capital costs have almost doubled from \$350 to \$550 million while the size of the hospital has been drastically cut. At almost double the cost, the new hospital will open with 479, instead of the announced 608 beds.
- Brought in hospital restructuring including cuts and movement of services out of communities under the guise of the Wait Times Strategy.
- Given new powers to the ministry and the new Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) to order restructuring and to find integration opportunities that include transfers of services, mergers and amalgamations without the input from hospital boards and community agencies.
- In 2003, promised to hire 8,000 new nurses, but are 30% short of that goal, and even further behind when it comes to permanent, full time positions.
- Have maintained a system of competitive bidding in homecare that has led to the closure of VON and Red Cross services, in favour of for-profit companies, which has damaged care and made working conditions worse for the predominately women care workers.

- Promised a "revolution" in long term care homes but have failed to deliver on minimum care standards that would protect residents and the health care workers who care for them (predominantly women, paid and unpaid).

**What Women Need**

Women are the majority of health care receivers and health care providers in Ontario. Health care affects women's health, work and financial well-being. Women need health care that is universal, accessible, comprehensive, publicly funded and publicly delivered.

**Ask Your Local Candidate:**

- Do you support preserving Medicare as a public, one tier system for all?
- Do you believe women's health issues are a priority?
- Will you commit to introducing a long-term care standard that will provide for 3.5 hours per day of nursing and personal care for residents in nursing homes and homes for the aged?
- Will you support taking competitive bidding for services out of health care?
- Will you commit to hiring more staff in all areas of health care, such as emergency services, home care, hospitals, long term care facilities, mental health and public health, including 12,000 new nurses by 2008?

**For more details go to the following website:**

Ontario Health Coalition: [www.ontariohealthcoaliton.ca](http://www.ontariohealthcoaliton.ca)