

## ON HEALTH CARE

March 2006

*“All this is fine, provided you are not either a hospital employee who is being laid off or transferred, or a patient who has to travel 100 kilometers for a routine procedure.”*

*- Ian Urquhart, Toronto Star, December 3, 2005*

### WHERE IS PUBLIC HEALTH CARE GOING?

#### SPEAK OUT AGAINST LHINs

The Ontario government has rushed through radical health care legislation that sets up new regional health boards called **Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs)**.

This legislation diminishes access to local health care delivery, threatens stability for thousands of health care workers, opens the door for private-for-profit corporations, and reduces local control.

#### What does this really mean for patients and health care workers?

The proposed Health Networks are simply government-appointed executive boards with a mandate to merge, transfer or even wind up services within the vast LHINs region.

- Service mergers mean job loss: You'll see fewer nurses, fewer MRI technologists, fewer cleaning staff, fewer pharmacy technicians, fewer RPNs, fewer dietary staff, fewer clerical workers...
- This means no more one-stop-shopping for health care at your local hospital or clinic. Under this Liberal plan you will have to travel farther to many different "centralized" locations for procedures, depending on who wins what contracts.
- The legislation opens the door to competitive bidding.
- For workers, this means re-applying for your job every couple of years, with no guarantees you'll get the job or keep your benefits or pension.
- For patients, this means less access to health services locally. Every couple of years when contracts expire, your care provider could change and you would have to go somewhere else.
- Constant turnover of contracts will drive workers to other provinces or out of health care altogether, creating shortages.
- Providers will cut corners to reduce costs and win contracts. The quality of care you receive will suffer.

While the legislation has passed, it is not too late to act. Show your displeasure during the March 30 by-elections. Ask for regulations that will suspend competitive bidding, create real community engagement, and discourage the removal of key services from local communities.

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