



Official Opposition • l'Opposition officielle

Ontario NDP Caucus • Groupe parlementaire du NPD de l'Ontario

September 19, 2022

Premier Doug Ford
Room 281
Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

By Email: premier@ontario.ca

Premier Ford,

We are writing to you to request that you immediately reconsider your decision to send existing surgeries to private for-profit clinics. The NDP Caucus does not believe this will solve the crisis plaguing hospitals across the province, including a massive staffing shortage — we believe it will make it worse.

The wait lists for surgeries were long before the pandemic and have grown exponentially since then. More than one in ten Ontarians are waiting more than eight hours to see a nurse or doctor, if they get that chance at all. Throughout the summer of 2022, there were more than 80 Emergency Department closures, ranging from 12 hours to several weeks in duration. All this was due to overwhelming staffing shortages.

This situation needs to be addressed, and the solution will not be found in privatization, dismantling a cornerstone of Medicare — this program defines us as Canadians, where care is provided based on need, not on the ability to pay.

This crisis demands immediate action. In 2021-22, 1,417 Ontarians died. Not from cancer. Not from road accidents. But simply from waiting for their critical surgeries. The long wait times, as we know, are because hospitals are severely understaffed.

Premier, we cannot fix the staffing shortage and save lives by diverting patients to for-profit clinics. That is not a sustainable solution to fixing Ontario's cherished public health care system.

Privatizing our health care system will lead to a deeper staffing crisis, longer wait times and ultimately lead to Ontarians losing lives and loved ones, while racking up medical debt. The bottom line for for-profit clinics is profit, not quality patient care.

Ontario NDP Caucus Services

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Every Ontarian deserves quality health care, and it should not be determined by the size of their bank account. People deserve to get surgery when they need it, not when they can afford it.

Our public health care system is already on its knees and cannot afford to lose more nurses and doctors by having them spend time at private clinics.

The NDP has solutions that can be implemented right away.

It all starts with giving nurses and health care workers the pay and respect they deserve, starting with getting rid of Bill 124 that's holding wages back and pushing staff to take the exit door. Time and again, nurses have said Bill 124 is the reason they're leaving.

The province can immediately launch a plan to attract, hire, train and retain health-care workers. We need to offer wages and incentives that are as good as or better than other provinces, like Quebec, where health-care workers can get up to \$18,000 in incentives.

We can reinstate the Practice-Ready Assessment program, which gets the most qualified internationally educated physicians and nurses working in our hospitals in just 12 weeks. We can make nursing school free.

We can fund health care, especially to keep up with today's exploding inflation. Investing in it now will pay off for Ontarians and the province in the short and long run.

Premier, Ontario's public health care is an integral pillar to what makes this province so great. For these reasons, we are requesting that you immediately end the pursuit of privatizing Ontario's precious health care system, and instead bolster it to meet the needs of every Ontarian.

In anticipation of your immediate response, thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Tabuns". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Peter Tabuns
Interim Official Opposition Leader

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "France Gélinas". The signature is cursive and stylized, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

France Gélinas
NDP Health Critic