

## ... About Healthcare Privatization in Ontario?



As a province, on a per capita basis, Ontario has the lowest health care funding. Ontario also has the lowest hospital funding, fewest hospital beds and fewest nurses.

“When it comes to program spending,” says Randy Robinson, Ontario Director for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, “Ontario spends \$2,000 less per person per year than the average of the other provinces.”

With 15 million people living in Ontario, that means the Ontario government would need to spend an additional \$30 billion each year just to get to the provincial average.

COVID had a relatively minuscule effect on the Ontario budget, largely due to a federal government injection of \$145 billion into pandemic-related supports in Ontario.

According to the Minister of Finance, the provincial debt to GDP ratio is at pre-COVID levels. Currently, revenues are \$19.5 billion higher than the government estimated a year ago.

This means money could be pouring into public services. However, according to the Financial Accountability Office (FAO), program spending is not on track to keep up with inflation or population growth or the reality of an aging population that requires more health care. The provincial government’s own budgets and updates confirm these facts.

<https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/ford-ramping-up-privatization-of-ontario-health-care-system>

Five major Ontario health care unions are calling on the government to not move forward with its plan to hand provincial funding to private, for-profit surgical clinics.

The unions – CUPE/OCHU, Ontario Nurses’ Association, OPSEU/SEFPO, SEIU Healthcare, and Unifor – say that this move will further starve our public healthcare system of funding and divert front-line staff to enrich private shareholders and diminish access to publicly-delivered healthcare. The unions say that patients will wait even longer for healthcare under this scheme and should not be misled into believing they will not pay out of pocket.

<https://cupe.ca/fords-plan-expand-private-clinics-ontario-will-cost-patients-dearly-risk-lives-and-significantly>

### **Despite pushback from the unions and others ...**

Ontario has released a new three-step plan that will see some for-profit community surgical and diagnostic centres take on more responsibilities, including additional surgeries and other medical procedures.

Speaking to reporters, Health Minister Sylvia Jones said this will help reduce wait times and eliminate surgical backlogs.

“We need to be bold, innovative and creative,” she said, adding that all of these procedures will be covered for patients under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

“We need to build on the spirit of collaboration on display across the health-care sector.”

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-releases-3-step-plan-to-invest-in-private-care-to-reduce-surgical-backlog-1.6232067>