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France Gélinas

MPP/Députée - Nickel Belt

June 14, 2012

Dear CARP Members,

I am happy to have an opportunity to speak directly with you on the timely issues of physician fees and health care spending in Ontario. The results of the CARP poll shed light on areas of concern to CARP members and provide insight on where you think our health care dollars would be best directed.

As you know, underlying the current question of cuts to physician fees is the recent negotiations between the McGuinty government and the Ontario Medical Association (OMA). Ontario's New Democrats have been very concerned about the government's unwillingness to bargain in good faith with the OMA and the increasingly oppositional tone of these negotiations. The Minister of Health has seemed so determined not to budge an inch that she has lost sight of her responsibility, the responsibility to put people and patient care first.

There is no question that challenging decisions about the future of our health care system in Ontario need to be made. However, refusing to talk to Ontario's physicians puts all of us in a lose-lose-lose situation; the government loses, the physicians lose, and every patient in Ontario also loses. New Democrats have repeatedly urged the government to consider the OMA's suggestion that a conciliator be used so that an agreement can be reached.

As the results of the CARP poll indicate, cuts to physician fees will not solve the problems that patients currently encounter in our health care system. Timely access to a family physician and specialist care, adequate and high quality home care, support for informal caregivers, and a strong system of social and economic supports are all high on the list for both CARP members and New Democrats

As CARP Members indicated we must also find ways to increase the supply of geriatric specialists, ensure the proper mix of health providers, and find ways to keep health care costs down. The solutions to these complex yet fundamentally important problems require cooperation and innovation from both government and Ontario's physicians. New Democrats want an end to the political games currently being fought between the McGuinty government and the OMA. We want the needs of patients to be put first so that all Ontarians have access to the right care at the right time.

Sincerely,

France Gélinas
MPP for Nickel Belt