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France Gélinas

MPP/Députée - Nickel Belt

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Dear CARP Members,

Ontario faces considerable challenges in meeting the health care needs of our citizens. All Ontarians should have reliable and consistent access to the highest quality health care. This care must not only include access to a family physician or nurse practitioner, but also include dependable home care, long-term care, and the full host of health care services available in our province. Unfortunately, today, this is not always the case.

For many Ontarians—and especially many older Ontarians—long wait times for home care and long term care, frustration in coordinating medical care between a family physician and specialists, and a disjointed and poorly organized health care system, are just some of the challenges faced by those needing care.

Ontario's New Democrats understand these challenges and the need for our province to do better. Last week, the Ontario PC caucus released a document detailing their plan for health care in Ontario. While many of the challenges and goals outlined in the paper are shared by New Democrats, we were disappointed by the lack of a robust plan to get us there.

There is no question that Ontario needs greater coordination and integration of the health care system so that patients can access the care they need, seamlessly. The objective of re-centering a health care system on the needs of patients is commendable; however, the PC plan of centralizing power within hospitals will not achieve the desired outcomes.

Ontario's New Democrats understand that the needs of patients must be the primary goal of health care in our province. That is why the NDP wants to focus on strengthening the primary care system and addressing the ongoing problems with the home care and long-term care system by ensuring care comes before profit. When it comes to whole system reform, we know that change must be based on the best evidence and not simply fall prey to political expediency.

New Democrats have long called for the much overdue review of the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs). For two years, the McGuinty government has prevented the mandatory review of the LHINs, thereby limiting improvements to patient care. Today, we are still waiting for this review to begin and we are no closer to understanding where the LHINs have been successful and where they have failed. This is unacceptable.

The plan delivered by the PC Caucus contains legitimate concerns about patient care and experience in Ontario. However, the roadmap they offer for improving this care leaves much to be desired.

Sincerely,

France Gélinas
MPP for Nickel Belt