

Ottawa West-Nepean NDP Association



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“In our OWN Words” Newsletter June 2013



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Health Care is not devouring Ontario's budget!

By Marlene Rivier, Ottawa Health Coalition

For some years the Ontario government, assisted by right wing think tanks and the government's own reports, have been bombarding Ontarians with the notion that health care costs are spiraling out of control, about to devour the entire provincial budget. In reality, health care as a proportion of the provincial budget, according to the Ministry of Finance, has shrunk from just under 50% of the budget in 2002 to just over 40% in 2011. Restructuring of health services has been happening in Ontario not as a result of a comprehensive vision for health care but as a result of underfunding. The Auditor General reports that the Ontario health care budget is undergoing a greater than \$3B cost curtailment.

Agencies are examining which services to toss out of the lifeboat in an effort to stay afloat as they struggle to achieve balanced budgets. Often the decisions are short-sighted and come with hefty human and financial costs. A prime example is the de-listing of physiotherapy and the shedding of outpatient physiotherapy services from hospitals. This effective privatization of physiotherapy is making such services inaccessible to many low and middle income Ontarians. In addition to the immediate human suffering this entails, the failure to treat problems early risks major medical interventions later and can lead to irremediable disability. The inability of people to work due to disability is a cost to the economy and adds to the reliance on government supports for those affected.

Mark Your Calendar! Thursday June 27 @ 7 pm Annual General Meeting

AND

Provincial Nomination Meeting

See Notice Enclosed!

Hospitals will receive no increase to their base funding this year and, with increased costs due to inflation, population growth and aging, this means hospitals are facing an estimated service reduction of 3.7%. Cuts to services are being announced across the province.

In terms of per capita spending on health care Ontario is below the national average at \$3,963, surpassing only B.C. and Quebec. At 8% of GDP, Ontario's health care spending exceeds only Saskatchewan and Alberta. In fact Ontario spends less on its public hospitals than any other province

We have lost 18,500 hospital beds in Ontario since 1990 and have the lowest rate of beds per capita of any province. In fact, internationally, in terms of beds per capita among industrialized countries, Ontario is almost dead last, surpassing only Turkey, Chile and Mexico. The truth is, we need to invest more in health care, not less!

In Memoriam

Our condolences to the family of Nancy Porter, a long-time member of the NDP, who passed away earlier this year.

Montreal Federal NDP Convention

Last April 12-14 saw the federal New Democratic Party hold its biennial convention in the heart of Montreal, at the Palais de Congrès. Over 2,000 delegates attended this policy convention. Ottawa West-Nepean NDP was ably represented by Peter Black, Alex Cullen, Theresa Kavanagh, Jan Michaels, Erin O'Hara, Marlene Rivier, Shelley Rivier, Debra Scarpelli and Dale Woloshin.

Speakers at the convention included not only our leader Thomas Mulcair, but Ken Georgetti of the CLC, Nobel Laureate (Economics) Joseph Stiglitz, Ruma Bose (philanthropist), Jeremy Bird of the Obama campaign, Olympian Sylvie Frechette, N.S. Premier Darrell Dexter, Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, and Diego Osorio (international aid worker).

This was, of course, a policy convention (*what does NDP stand for? Never-ending Debate Party!*). Over 400 resolutions were before the Convention, but time (and debate!) only allowed some 50 resolutions to be adopted. Unfortunately the OWN NDP resolutions on the Bank of Canada and on postal banking did not reach the convention floor, as time ran out.

Of note was the debate over the role of socialism in our party's constitution. The result was a carefully crafted compromise (which garnered more than the 2/3 majority required) which recognized the party's social democratic and democratic socialist traditions and our belief in social and economic justice.

Windsor and London By-Elections expected this summer!

The Ontario Liberals, reduced to a minority government in the 2011 provincial election (which saw the NDP increase from 10 seats to 17!) found themselves in deep waters as a result of scandal (ORNGE, gas plants) and a \$12 billion deficit. Their gambit to regain a majority through the Kitchener-Waterloo by-election failed as the NDP elected school trustee Catherine Fife as MPP in a stunning victory.

Premier Dalton McGuinty then took the extraordinary step of resigning and proroguing the Legislature to buy time for a leadership convention, with the result that Kathleen Wynne became the new Liberal premier of Ontario.

However, long-time Finance Minister Dwight Duncan and embattled Energy Minister Chris Bently resigned, clearing the way for by-elections in Windsor-Tecumseh and London West. With the Ontario Budget now out of the way (*Congratulations to Andrea Horwath and her NDP team for winning concessions!*), these by-elections are expected to be held later in the summer.



A big thank you to Pat McDougall for his cartoon – hope you like it!

OWN NDP Committees – Where the Action is!

New ideas and new energy has led to new activities for the Ottawa West-Nepean NDP! Did you know we have a *Community Outreach Committee*, which is contacting service agencies and communities in Ottawa West-Nepean? Did you know we have a *Communications Committee*, responsible not only for this newsletter and media contacts but our web site as well? Did you know we have a *Voter Canvassing Committee*, which has organized door-knocking already? Did you know we have a *Fundraising Committee*, which will be organizing a BBQ later this summer? Did you know we have a *Voter Information Committee*, responsible for inputting and maintaining our database? And a *Human Resources Committee* to help with training? **We do!**

We have over 40 active volunteers, but are always looking for more as we build our capacity. Join in! The more the merrier! Just drop us a line at info@ownndp.ca.

How to contact the OWN NDP:

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Or phone Marlene at 613-828-2990

Or you can e-mail us at info@ownndp.ca

And check out our web site at www.ownndp.ca