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Ford government's primary care announcement plays politics with people's need for a family doctor: It's a primary care "plan" to implement a plan delayed until the cusp of an election

Toronto – No matter how anyone tries to spin the numbers, the actual data from sources not tainted by politics, show that more than a million Ontarians have lost their family doctor since before the Ford government was elected, reports the Ontario Health Coalition. In 2016, before the Ford government was elected 1.3 million Ontarians did not have a family doctor, [according to data from Statistics Canada](#). By July 2024, there were 2.5 million Ontarians without a family doctor, [according to the Ontario College of Family Physicians](#) and the [numbers are projected to get worse](#).

The fact that the Ford government waited until an election campaign to make an announcement is "reprehensible", says the Coalition.

"Talk is cheap. Waiting for years to announce this funding and then announcing only a plan to implement a plan within four years from now smacks of political manipulation on an issue that should never be used as something with which a political party plays politics", said Ross Sutherland, Coalition chairperson.

"In our 40-years of advocacy for public health care we have seen the bad and the good. Objectively, our health care has never been in such crisis and disarray as it is now", warned Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Coalition. "While driving our public system into crisis, the Ford government has [shifted billions of dollars in public funding to for-profit privatization](#). It did this without any mandate from the public. In fact, [they lied outright leading into the last election](#) categorically stating they would not privatize. Doing all that while waiting until the cusp of an election to announce funding and a vague promise to deal with primary care is reprehensible."

The Coalition also warned the Ford government is using public money to throw open the doors to the for-profit corporate takeover of primary care. Since the last election, they gave public funding to Shoppers Drug Mart, owned by Loblaw corporation, to create for-profit primary care clinics. Telus, also, is running a for-profit primary care now in Ontario. They have given power to diagnose and prescribe – to the same patients – to for-profit pharmacies, a clear conflict of interest made worse given [the billing for unnecessary med checks and corporate pressure to increase billing volumes \(and profits\)](#). The Coalition points to extraordinarily high costs of groceries and telecommunications in its warning about the for-profit takeover.

The Coalition is demanding that Ford -- and all of Ontario's political parties' leaders -- commit to stop the corporate takeover of primary care and commit to funding only non-profit and local teams without corporate ownership.

The Health Coalition is non-partisan. It represents more than 750,000 Ontarians, more than 500 member organizations and more than 40 local chapters across the province. The Coalition does not endorse any political party. They work to advocate with all political parties to improve public health care for all and speak out against any political party that dismantles and privatizes public health care. The Coalition was founded to advocate for public health care before the Canada Health Act was brought in and has acted as a public interest group to protect it ever since.