

June 7, 2024



## Public Hearings on Protecting and Improving Local Hospitals: Community members invited to give input

TORONTO — In response to more than 1,200 closures of emergency departments and other local hospital services over the last year, the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) is holding public hearings across Ontario to develop recommendations for the future of our local hospitals, including small, rural and northern community hospitals. Mid size or larger local hospitals will be included where they are at risk of closure.

The hearings are an opportunity for patients and community residents, service agencies, patient advocacy groups, concerned citizens, municipal leaders, health care professionals and others to provide their thoughts.

The results of the hearings will be collected in a report with recommendations on how to protect and improve, especially small and rural, local hospitals.

Hearings will be open to all Ontario residents. They will be held with both online (Zoom) and in-person options so everyone can attend and participate. People may submit written or spoken statements on their experiences and concerns to an expert, non-partisan panel.

Presenters making verbal submissions will be able to speak for a maximum of seven minutes. The deadline for written submissions is Thursday, June 20 at 5 p.m.

“These hearings are a chance for people in rural and northern Ontario to share their experiences and to safeguard and improve our local hospitals, especially those at risk of closures,” said Brenda Scott, chair of the Coalition’s small, rural & local hospital committee. “We want to hear what has been cut, what if anything has improved, and what is needed to improve equity, save our hospitals and improve health care for rural Ontario.”

“Decisions about our local hospitals have been removed from the local communities that have funded and relied upon them for generations,” added Natalie Mehra, executive director of the OHC. “Residents in these areas deserve the opportunity to share their concerns and influence decisions that will impact them.”

The expert panel includes:

- Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition
- Brenda Scott, Chair of Small and Rural Hospital Committee with Ontario Health Coalition and Co-chair of Grey Bruce Health Coalition
- France Gélinas, NDP Health Critic and MPP for Nickel Belt (Ontario New Democratic Party)
- Dr. Adil Shamji, Liberal Health Critic and MPP for Don Valley East (Ontario Liberal Party)
- Mike Schreiner, Leader of the Green Party of Ontario and MPP for Guelph (Green Party of Ontario)
- Graham Webb, Lawyer and Executive Director of the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly
- Additional doctors, nurses, health care worker leaders, and health professionals.

Here is the list of hearings. Everyone is welcome to attend. To make a verbal presentation and give your input at the hearings, you must register here: <https://bit.ly/ohc-june2024>.

<b>Saturday, June 8</b> 9:30-11:30 a.m.	Welland and Niagara	<b>*Corrected address</b> Welland Civic Square, Community Room, 60 East Main St. Welland Or join by Zoom at <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81560972577">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81560972577</a>
<b>Saturday, June 8</b> 3-4:30 p.m.	St. Marys, Clinton, Seaforth, Stratford and Region	Royal Canadian Legion Branch 236, 66 Church St N, St. Marys Or join by Zoom at <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87422681443">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87422681443</a>
<b>Tuesday, June 11</b> 9-11 a.m.	Bracebridge and Muskokas	Royal Canadian Legion Branch 161, 168 Muskoka Rd. Bracebridge Or join by Zoom at <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81174304511">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81174304511</a>
<b>Tuesday, June 11</b> 1:30-3:30 p.m.	Barrie & Simcoe County	Barrie Public Library, Angus Ross Room, 60 Worsley St. Barrie Or join by Zoom at <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82235156274">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82235156274</a>
<b>Thursday June 13</b> 12-2 p.m.	Almonte, Arnprior, Mississippi Mills, Renfrew County & Region	Almonte Civitan Club, 500 Almonte St. Almonte Or join by Zoom at <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84185435564">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84185435564</a>
<b>Friday, June 14</b> 4-6 p.m.	Haliburton, Minden and Region	Royal Canadian Legion Branch 129, 719 Mountain St. Haliburton Or join by Zoom at <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82620928242">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82620928242</a>
<b>Monday, June 17</b> 12:30-2 p.m.	Thunder Bay & the Northwest	Thunder Bay Public Library: Mary J.L. Black Branch Community Program Room, 901 Edward St S. Thunder Bay Or join by Zoom at <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83145033983">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83145033983</a>
<b>Tuesday, June 18</b> 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Chesley, Walkerton, Hanover, Durham and Region	Chesley Community Centre Community Hall, 129 4th Ave SE. Chesley Or join by Zoom at <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84939615045">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84939615045</a>
<b>Tuesday, June 18</b> 2-3 p.m.	Wingham & Area	North Huron Westcast Community Complex, Hot Stove Lounge Meeting Room, 99 Kerr Dr. Wingham Or join by Zoom at <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84441433028">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84441433028</a>

**Tuesday, June 18**  
4:30-5:30 p.m.

Mount Forest,  
Palmerston, Listowel,  
Durham and Region

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 134,  
140 King St W. Mount Forest

Or join by Zoom at

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82526483075>

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### **About the Ontario Health Coalition**

Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) is a non-profit, non-partisan public interest activist coalition and network. OHC works to protect and improve our public health care system by honouring and strengthening the principles of the Canada Health Act. OHC represents more than 500 member organizations and a network of Local Health Coalitions and individual members including: seniors' groups; patients' organizations; unions; nurses and health professionals' organizations; physicians and physician organizations that support the public health system; non-profit community agencies; student groups; ethnic and cultural organizations; residents' and family councils; retirees; poverty and equality-seeking groups, and women's organizations. For more information, visit [www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca](http://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca).