**Appeal to the Ontario Federation of Union Retirees**

The Chatham Kent Health Coalition (CKHC), the Wallaceburg-Walpole Island Health Coalition (W-WIHC) and the Sarnia Lambton Health Coalition (SLHC) are local coalitions who work closely with the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC); we are non-profit and non-partisan, and share the OHC’s mandate, which is to protect and expand Ontario’s Public healthcare System. We fight against privatization and cuts to health services.

I am the Chairperson for the CKHC and for the SLHC; I am the Co-Chair of the W-WIHC. In each of these volunteer groups, we have strong and committed members; however our numbers are low, so the work that must be done can become overwhelming.

We are not fighting specifically against the Doug Ford Government; we are opposed to his healthcare policies. Bill 74 and the Budget Bill for 2019 has given the Ford’s cabinet and the Minister of Health sweeping powers to force closures of hospitals and non-profit clinics, merge hospitals, increase the ease of privatization of health services and hospitals, amalgamate services, transfer public services to the for-profit sector, weaken or decimate public service unions and the list goes on. We do not believe that this is good healthcare policy and will negatively affect all Ontarians. It will be doubly hard for those living in small towns and rural areas, as small hospital close and health services are moved to larger towns or cities.

We are constantly trying to recruit members, if even for short periods. That is the reason that I am contacting you today. I am hoping that you are able to help me increase our numbers; if you see your way to share my information with your members, it is my hope that we will be able to find local people who have a similar commitment to saving Public Healthcare.

We are asking that you review your membership data, and share our request with your members and perhaps with other organizations, in an effort to increase the numbers and strength of the local coalitions mentioned above. All three of the coalitions were well represented at the OHC’s Queens Park Rally for Public Healthcare on April 30. But the job does not end there. Mr. Ford’s government is also attacking other public programs, many of which are in the news almost daily: Education, OHIP Plus, Mental Health Funding, Library Services, Flood Protection organizations, etc.

More fight-backs will be needed to ensure that Ontario’s Public Programs and Ontarians across the province will enjoy the benefits of their tax dollars. I am proud to live in a province that has established public programs which are designed to assist all and which demonstrate empathy to all. We cannot let Public Healthcare and the other Public programs become only a memory of times past!

Thank you for considering my request.

Warm regards,

Shirley Roebuck, Retired Registered Nurse, Board member of the OHC, Chairperson , CKHC, SLHC, Co-Chair W-WIHC.

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