



September 21, 2012

Hon. Deb Matthews
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
80 Grosvenor Street
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2C4

Open Letter

Re: Reject sale of Shouldice Hospital to For-Profit U.S. Conglomerate

Dear Minister,

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) strongly urges you to reject the proposed sale of Shouldice Hospital to a large for-profit conglomerate.

Members of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) have consistently called on governments of all political stripes to affirm their commitment to the *Canada Health Act* and the fundamental principle of a single-tier, not-for-profit health-care system.

That's why RNAO has asked its members to write to you to block the proposed sale of Shouldice Hospital. Last week, Centric Health, a rapidly growing health products company, announced its intention to purchase the hospital, well-known for the treatment of hernias. Centric is controlled by U.S.-based Global Healthcare Investments and Solutions (GHIS), one of the largest private, for-profit health-care conglomerates in the world.

Shouldice Hospital is family-founded and operated, and predates the *Canada Health Act*. That's why it was "grand-parented" when the act came into effect in 1984 but subject to the understanding that clinics and hospitals in Ontario must be publicly-funded and not-for-profit.

The association is calling on its members to protest the sale. Ontarians do not need care that cuts corners to maximize returns for shareholders or companies that provide faster access for those who can afford it while leaving others behind in the queue. This is not only wrong; it is totally unconscionable and unacceptable.

You have made it clear you want to shift more procedures out of hospitals and into not-for-profit community-based clinics. This principle is outlined in the government's *Action Plan for Health Care*.

There are examples of non-profit community clinics, such as Toronto's Kensington Eye Institute, which provide high-quality eye care through Ontario's Health Insurance Plan.

Minister, **RNAO urges you in the strongest possible terms** to stand up for not-for-profit health care and reject the proposed sale of Shouldice Hospital to a large for-profit conglomerate. We urge you to uphold your commitment to the *Canada Health Act* and say no to the Shouldice sale.

Warm regards,

Doris Grinspun, RN, MSN, PhD, LLD(hon), O.ONT.
Chief Executive Officer, RNAO

Rhonda Seidman-Carlson, RN, MN
President, RNAO

Cc:
Premier Dalton McGuinty
Tim Hudak, Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
Andrea Horwath, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Ontario