

MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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.

The deadline to register to make a verbal presentation at their local hearing is Friday, June 7 at 5 p.m. Presenters 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>.

Saturday, June 8 9:30-11:30 a.m.	Welland and Niagara	Welland Community Centre, Community Room, 145 Lincoln St, Welland Or join by Zoom at https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81560972577
Saturday, June 8 3-4:30 p.m.	St. Marys, Clinton, Seaforth, Stratford and Region	Royal Canadian Legion Branch 236, 66 Church St N, St. St. Marys Or join by Zoom at https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87422681443
Tuesday, June 11 9-11 a.m.	Bracebridge and Muskokas	Royal Canadian Legion Branch 161, 168 Muskoka Rd. Bracebridge Or join by Zoom at https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81174304511
Tuesday, June 11 1:30-3:30 p.m.	Barrie & Simcoe County	Barrie Public Library, Angus Ross Room, 60 Worsley St. Barrie Or join by Zoom at https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82235156274
Wednesday, June 12 10-11:30 a.m.	Mindemoya, Espanola & Manitoulin Island	J H Burt Memorial Arena, Mindemoya War Memorial Hall, 6032 Hwy 542, Mindemoya Or join by Zoom at https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84718985062
Wednesday, June 12 3-4:30 p.m.	Blind River, Algoma & the North Shore of Lake Huron	Royal Canadian Legion Branch 189, 27 Hawkins St. Blind River Or join by Zoom at https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86282218917
Thursday June 13 12-2 p.m.	Almonte, Arnprior, Mississippi Mills, Renfrew County & Region	Almonte Civitan Club, 500 Almonte St. Almonte Or join by Zoom at https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84185435564
Thursday June 13 3:45-5:15 p.m.	Perth, Smiths Falls and Region	Perth & District Union Public Library, Frizell Room, 30 Herriott St. Perth Or join by Zoom at https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81617014084
Friday, June 14 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Campbellford, Northumberland Hills, Peterborough and Region	Royal Canadian Legion Branch 103, Vimy Room, 34 Bridge St W. Campbellford Or join by Zoom at https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82099783566

Friday, June 14 4-6 p.m.	Haliburton, Minden and Region	Royal Canadian Legion Branch 129, 719 Mountain St. Haliburton Or join by Zoom at https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82620928242
Monday, June 17 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 https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83145033983
Tuesday, June 18 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 https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84939615045
Tuesday, June 18 2-3 p.m.	Wingham & Area	North Huron Wescast Community Complex, Hot Stove Lounge Meeting Room, 99 Kerr Dr. Wingham Or join by Zoom at https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84441433028
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

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.

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