

The London Health Coalition has been at the forefront of public healthcare advocacy in the city for a quarter of a century. We are one of more than 400 member organizations comprising a province-wide network of local Health Coalitions with a membership base of well over 700,000 Ontarians.

The Ontario Health Coalition is an inclusive and politically non-partisan big tent organization encompassing seniors' groups, patient advocates, unions, nurses, physicians, allied healthcare providers, non-profit community agencies, ethnic and cultural support organizations, students, poverty and equality seeking Canadians, all galvanized in our support of the universal public healthcare system.

Working collaboratively to protect and improve our public health care system, we strive to honour and strengthen the principles of the Canada Health Act: universality; comprehensiveness; portability; accessibility and public administration.

Our shared commitment to core values of equality, democracy, social inclusion and social justice inform our activism, fueling our engagement in public policy and on matters related to our public health care system and healthy communities. Hence, the London Health Coalition's interest in the Councilor's project.

The province is endowed with the power to enforce universal public healthcare and is legally obliged to do so. Councilor Ferreira has recognized the corrupting influence of profit in the delivery of addiction services and is righteous to pursue public options. Indeed, public solutions do exist and have so in the past.

Not so long ago, the provincially funded London Psychiatric Hospital (LPH) provided psychiatric care and was commonly used for individuals dealing with both severe mental health issues and substance addiction. The ill conceived political decision to permanently shutter LPH and St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital, cost the region up to 80% of its inpatient psychiatric/addictions bed capacity, the consequences of which the City is forced to live with to this day.

Privileging for-profit health provision is a statement of values. A government willing to stash \$4 billion taxpayer dollars into a privately run investment fund and haphazardly buy and sell multi-million dollar private jets, needs to be nudged into reconsideration of its values and policy choices.

This is the moment for the City of London to step up for the public good. Join the London Health Coalition in endorsing Councilor Ferreira's motion to do just that.

Delegation status would be appreciated.

Respectfully yours,
Peter Bergmanis
Co-Chair
London Health Coalition