



February 20, 2024

MPP Brian Riddell
Chair, Standing Committee on Social Policy
Whitney Block, Room 1405
99 Wellesley Street W
Toronto, Ont. M7A 1A2

Dear Mr. Riddell,

Re: Protecting public health-care infrastructure in Ontario

I am writing to you on behalf of the 68,000 registered nurses and health-care professionals, and over 18,000 nursing student affiliates represented by the Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA). Our members work in hospitals, long-term care (LTC) facilities, public health units, the community and clinics across Ontario.

ONA is deeply concerned by the government's decision to privatize components of health care. Last year, we strongly opposed Bill 60, *Your Health Act 2023*, which allowed more private for-profit clinics to perform surgeries and diagnostic procedures. We also opposed Bill 135, *The Convenient Care at Home Act*, which established the structure where for-profit provider companies can operate and erode Ontario's public home care system. ONA continues to have deep concerns regarding the use of for-profit nursing agencies and for-profit LTC homes.

If passed, the *Improving Real Estate Management Act, 2023* gives the Minister of Infrastructure oversight over properties that belong to Public Health Ontario, Ontario Health and Ontario Health atHome. Public health-care infrastructure in Ontario is invaluable. It is critical that buildings, labs, hospitals and other public health-care facilities continue to provide social benefit.

We are concerned that the proposed legislation makes it easier for the government to sell-off public health facilities to private, for-profit developers. We urge the Standing Committee on Social Policy to amend the legislation so that public health properties cannot simply be handed over to well-connected developers. Instead, unused properties should be repurposed for community use. Examples of this include building non-profit Community Health Centres, long-term care homes and co-operative and supportive housing projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Ariss".

Erin Ariss, RN
President, Ontario Nurses' Association

CC: France G elinas, Vice Chair, Standing Committee on Social Policy