



MEDIA RELEASE

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**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PROVIDES A *SECOND OPINION*  
RE: ONTARIO HEALTH CARE**

**TORONTO** – In a report released today, Ontario’s business advocate calls for an honest, thoughtful public debate about innovative and sustainable reforms to a health care system that continues to dominate provincial program spending in Ontario, leaving a declining share of revenues for other critical public investments.

*A Second Opinion* is published by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) with contributions from members of the Greater Fort Erie Chamber of Commerce and from across the province. It points to the rising cost of health care, accounting for 46% of the provincial budget in 2008-09 and growing at a rate higher than inflation and greater than the growth of provincial revenues. Already double the spending on education, the report points out that health care costs will only continue to grow as the population ages.

Every Ontarian deserves timely access to quality health care and yet, not only are they not assured of that today, but the escalating cost of our current health care model is compromising our ability to invest in other important areas like education and tax reform.

The OCC argues that successive leadership at the Federal and Provincial levels has been hampered in the ability to openly discuss innovative reform, for fear of a public backlash. Ontario has applied band-aid solutions but lags behind other jurisdictions in Canada and abroad in implementing substantive reforms.

As a means to start the discussion, *A Second Opinion* puts forward a number of possible reforms. Among them, are an actuarial analysis and forecast of health care in Ontario to provide a sound financial basis for long term planning and an expanded but defined role for the private sector.

“Private delivery of public health care is like the elephant in the room that no one wants to address. Yet our publicly funded health care system is already buttressed by numerous private service providers who are accountable for high quality, cost effective services while not restricting access,” adds Crispino. “Take for example our private labs and clinics and about 75% of physicians in Ontario who operate as private practitioners.”

The report also suggests an open debate consider the merits of the following:

- successful health care strategies in other Canadian provinces, and other countries;
- immediate implementation of the plan to create electronic records for all Ontarians;
- expansion of the provincial Wait Time Strategy to include all procedures and services;
- adoption of an expedited process for the credentialing of internationally trained physicians;
- further integration of nurse practitioners into the health care system;

- a revised formula to determine under-serviced calculations.

The Greater Fort Erie Chamber of Commerce and the OCC invite all stakeholders in Ontario to set aside preconceived notions and ideology, and openly discuss and debate these ideas, as well as their own. A full listing of the Chamber recommendations can be found in **A Second Opinion** at [www.occ.on.ca](http://www.occ.on.ca).

While not prescriptive or endorsing any one specific solution, the OCC believes that part of the open and public policy debates could include pilot programs underpinned by third party outcome evaluations.

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