

March 28, 2023



To: Premier Doug Ford, [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)  
Health Minister Sylvia Jones, [Sylvia.Jones@pc.ola.org](mailto:Sylvia.Jones@pc.ola.org)

**Re: Proposed cuts to healthcare coverage for uninsured people in Ontario.**

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Jones:

We are writing to you today on behalf of the Ontario AIDS Network's membership of 45 community-based organizations and those presently delivering the HIV and AIDS response across Ontario.

As a sector working in partnership and collaboration with Ontario's healthcare providers, Community Health Centre (CHCs), and social service delivery networks, **we urgently ask the provincial government to immediately rescind the cuts to healthcare coverage for uninsured people in Ontario, and to make this essential program permanent.**

Our sector calls on the Ontario government to stop the cuts and make this program meaningfully permanent through collaborative consultation with the province's network of healthcare providers, social service and migrant support organizations to ensure access to healthcare for all people living in Ontario.

In March 2020, the Ontario government removed long-standing barriers to medically necessary care for people in Ontario without health insurance (OHIP Bulletin 4749). The directive introduced two milestone changes in making healthcare accessible:

1. removal of the three-month waiting period for newcomers, new inland permanent residents; and returning Canadian citizens;
2. and funding for physician and hospital services for individuals without health insurance.

### **High Costs to Individual and Public Health**

As a sector, we have deep concerns about the impact of the province's plans to remove this coverage. Without this access to care, individual health will suffer as people delay or forgo seeking prohibitively expensive medical care with potentially fatal consequences. Plans to end healthcare coverage for uninsured people in Ontario on March 31st will lead to immense

suffering among racialized and equity-deserving people including migrants and others without health insurance as well as individuals who face barriers to maintaining a valid health card. In implementing this change, the most under-resourced in our society will be forced out of care systems, triggering poor public and individual health outcomes. Over the coming days, we urge the government to consider the economic efficiency inherent in a system that positions individuals to address health issues and receive timely care before conditions deteriorate.

### **Impact on Black, Brown, and Racialized People**

Prior to March 2020, an estimated half a million children and adults living in Ontario did not have health insurance. This included newly landed immigrants, those newly approved for permanent residency, returning Canadian citizens in the three-month waiting period, those pending responses to inland immigration sponsorship or humanitarian and compassionate applications, temporary foreign workers between contracts, international students, and non-status residents. Those without valid health cards due to homelessness, mental health concerns, and other issues also faced barriers to care.

Three years ago, the government made the right decision to ensure that any person living in Ontario could receive essential care. Rolling back this coverage is cruel and will have catastrophic health consequences. Our neighbours, our friends, our co-workers, and our community members deserve equal access to healthcare.

Sincerely,

### **[Members, Affiliates, and partners of the Ontario AIDS Network](#)**

- 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations
- Action Positive
- African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario
- Africans in Partnership Against AIDS Toronto
- AIDS Action Now
- AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area
- AIDS Committee of Durham Region
- AIDS Committee of North Bay and Area
- AIDS Committee of Ottawa
- AIDS Committee of Toronto
- Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention
- ARCH HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health
- Asian Community AIDS Services
- Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention  
Bruce House  
Casey House  
CATIE  
CAYR Community Connections  
Centre Francophone du Grand Toronto  
Centro para Gente de Habla Hispana  
Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment  
Elevate NWO  
Fife House  
Gilbert Centre  
Group Health Centre  
Hemophilia Ontario  
HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario  
HIV Legal Network  
Let's Stop AIDS  
Maggie's Toronto  
Moyo Health and Community Services  
Oahas  
Ontario HIV Treatment Network  
PASAN  
Peterborough AIDS Resource Network  
Positive Living Niagara  
Pozitive Pathways  
Realize  
Regional HIV/AIDS Connection  
Réseau Access Network  
Teresa Group  
The AIDS Network  
Toronto HIV Network  
Toronto People With AIDS Foundation  
Trellis HIV and Community Care  
Women's Health in Women's Hands  
Women's HIV/AIDS Initiative

**Contact: Kate Palbom, [kpalbom@ontarioaidsnetwork.ca](mailto:kpalbom@ontarioaidsnetwork.ca)**

Manager Policy and Advocacy

Ontario AIDS Network