

Ontario Association of Radiologists

October 2, 2002

Honourable Anne McLellan, PC, MP
Minister of Health
Brooke Claxton Bldg., Tunney's Pasture
P.L. 0906C
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9

Dear Minister McLellan:

The Ontario Association of Radiologists has released a report providing clear evidence that more than \$200 million of funding cuts imposed by the Ontario government since 1994/95 has impeded patients' access to common diagnostic imaging services across Ontario. The findings were released in an OAR report entitled "The Secret Behind Waiting Lists: How Ontario Government Decisions have Caused Radiology Waiting Lists".

The report examines five commonly available diagnostic imaging tests used to detect the leading causes of death. The tests include mammography, barium enema x-rays, ultrasound, nuclear medicine cardiac studies, and bone mineral densitometry.

The findings of the report conclude that there is:

- An inconsistent level of access to common radiology examinations for the leading causes of mortality
- Wide fluctuations in waiting lists across Ontario for the same diagnostic examination
- There are over 260,000 people in Ontario on waiting lists for common examinations
- About 90% of people are waiting longer than is deemed medically appropriate for common examinations
- Waiting lists for these examinations have increased steadily
- The Ontario government has removed over \$200 million of radiology funding that is used to pay direct operating costs to provide the services

We are shocked by the report's findings.

Ontario Association of Radiologists

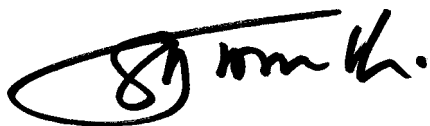
Repeated efforts to explain the seriousness of the situation to the Ontario Minister of Health and his officials have been ignored. Previous reports and correspondence issued by our Association about the problem have been ignored. The provincial government has offered no explanation to explain why it is continuing a direction that is dangerous to public safety.

It is our view that Ontario is in clear violation of the Canada Health Act on the basis that it is not fulfilling the requirements about providing access to patients. Section 12. (1) (a) of the Canada Health Act states that a province "must provide for insured health services on uniform terms and conditions and on a basis that does not impede or preclude, either directly or indirectly whether by charges or otherwise, reasonable access to those services by insured persons".

Section 14. (1) of the Canada Health Act authorizes you in your capacity as Health Minister to consult with the Ontario Health Minister where you believe the province has failed to satisfy any one of the criteria set out in Sections 8 to 13 of the Act, or where the province has not given an undertaking satisfactory to you to remedy the problem. It is imperative in our view that you must initiate an investigation with the Ontario government so that there is some resolution to address the failure to provide a consistent and appropriate standard of access for all Ontario patients

This matter demands your immediate attention. We are available to meet with you and your officials to provide additional information. We have enclosed a copy of our report for your information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Giuseppe Tarulli", enclosed in a large, loopy oval.

Giuseppe Tarulli, MD, FRCPC
President

Encl.