

## **Union joins KGH head in seeking more funding**

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Re: the story "Hospital won't get money" (Oct. 31).

Any Ontario hospital chief executive officer who advocates better patient care, adequate provincial funding to provide needed health services and improved working conditions for staff deserves a pat on the back from all of us in the Kingston community.

So it's very telling that last week, Paul Huras, the head of the regional health network acting for the provincial government, saw fit to publicly chastise Kingston General Hospital CEO Joe de Mora for making the community aware that KGH is struggling to provide quality health services with the level of funding it receives from the provincial government.

Huras's attack came just weeks after re-elected Liberal MPP John Gerretsen publicly threatened a government takeover of KGH. It's a good bet that Gerretsen made the threat with the approval of Ontario's health minister.

None of this is a coincidence. Through Huras and Gerretsen, the health minister is sending a message to all hospital presidents and CEOs. That is, anyone who acts on principle to protect the quality of local hospital services will be publicly lambasted and ridiculed.

Speaking on behalf of 1,400 front-line KGH staff, I want to tell Ontario's health minister, George Smitherman, that we stand with de Mora. If de Mora sticks to his guns, he is doing what many health-care workers and others in Kingston believe is right: standing up and advocating for better health care for patients.

This episode has inadvertently exposed the Ontario government's real purpose for regional health networks: to contain costs, ration services and create competition among health service providers for scarce provincial health funding.

Any suggestions that, if KGH receives adequate provincial funding, other health services in the community would lose out simply expose the government's agenda of playing one health service provider against the other.

"Beggars thy neighbour" is not a concept the members of CUPE 1974 are buying into. Be assured that CUPE 1974 will fight for better hospital and other health-care services throughout eastern Ontario.

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President

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Kingston