

"Good decision to end Hamilton home care bidding," CUPE Now it's time to end bidding province-wide

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HAMILTON, Ont. – It is positive that the Ontario health minister has told vulnerable people receiving home care here that he is on their side and that a contract change is dead, says Sid Ryan, the Ontario president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).

CUPE has repeatedly warned George Smitherman that competitive bidding for health care services was doomed to failure. Despite the warning and a provincial review that showed a huge turnover in staff, cost increases for services and a reduced range of services, Smitherman reinstated the home care bidding.

"The Hamilton bidding process has proved that decision was a mistake. The elimination of not-for-profit providers at the outset of the bidding process was totally unacceptable to the community, as it was to CUPE," says Ryan.

The minister has indicated he will soon make an announcement about the future of home care in Hamilton. "But he must do more. Smitherman has an opportunity to build on his positive decision," says Ryan. Ending the bidding process currently only applies to Hamilton home care services. "If he really wants the best quality home care services for Ontario, now he should make the choice to end home care competitive bidding province-wide."

This step is vitally important because, after a four-year suspension, dozens of home care contracts are now coming due.

Ryan said that CUPE will work closely with the government and the ministry to build an integrated not-for-profit home care system that provides top quality care to patients.

On a personal note, Ryan congratulates Hamiltonians for standing together and supporting one another on this issue. "Your efforts here have benefited everyone who receives home care services. Fighting back works."

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