

**2014 MPP Candidate Questionnaire re: Proposed Single Site Acute Care Hospital**

**1. *Do you support a proposed single site acute care hospital for the region?***

While Liberals and PCs take shots at each other over healthcare in the Niagara region and play games for political points, the best interests of the people of the region have been ignored. The Ontario NDP is the only party firmly committed to providing adequate funding for infrastructure and services in the communities where they are needed. We have been clear all along that any future plans for hospitals or clinics must ensure that no community elsewhere is denied the care it needs. We fully support new, state of the art health facilities, but we also remain committed to making sure that people can get the best care possible in local community clinics or hospitals. Any new facilities or services must not come at the expense of others in smaller communities in the rest of the region. Instead of improving care, Liberals have cut nurses and beds all across the region and the PCs plan to deepen those cuts. The Ontario NDP believes in high quality, public healthcare that is accessible for all Ontarians. We stand firmly against the erosion of these principles and services.

**2. *If elected, will you help ensure the widest possible community consultation and democratic process in the development of the hospital?***

To date, the process has been inadequate for the public to have a meaningful role. The Ontario NDP is committed to working with the Site Selection Steering Committee to build a more inclusive role for public consultation and a more transparent and accountable process. We know from several examples under Liberal governments that these kinds of important decisions get made for political reasons without regard to the best interest of the communities themselves. In 2009, at the request of Andrea Horwath, the Ombudsman had to investigate a similar situation where decisions to integrate health services in Hamilton were made without public input and had negative impacts on community care. Unlike the Liberals, we will require real and wide consultation when we make a decision on where the site will be located.

**3. *What criteria do you consider important when considering a site for a new hospital?***

The foremost concern in deciding where to locate hospitals must be that the healthcare needs of the people of the region are served and that the highest level of care is accessible for everyone. Part of this involves considering supporting health infrastructure in the area, including existing clinics and planned health centres. The specific characteristics and needs of the community and predicted changes to population and demographics are important. Road infrastructure, transit, transportation and air ambulance availability will play a role. Considerations around the impacts of a facility's location on staffing needs to be studied – where we can place a hospital where it will create jobs, attract people to communities, make sure that we can attract the best doctors, nurses and healthcare professionals and that existing staff can keep their jobs with minimal disruption. Environmental and land use issues as well as urban and community planning factors should be weighed. There are a multitude of factors that must be considered in deciding on hospitals, but the utmost goal must be to ensure the highest level of care is accessible to all and that the public is adequately consulted and engaged in the process.