

Health Providers Against Poverty Remains Concerned About McGuinty Government's Commitment to Fighting Poverty in Ontario

Members of Health Providers Against Poverty today expressed appreciation for the first small steps the McGuinty government today promised to take to fight poverty in Ontario. They remain concerned, however, that the government may not take the further actions required to reduce poverty, the greatest threat to Ontarians' health.

“While a promise to reduce child poverty by 25 per cent in five years is important, there are hundreds of thousands of vulnerable adults living in poverty in this province who require immediate government intervention to prevent the huge health risks posed by their poverty,” said Anne Egger, a nurse practitioner in Toronto and a member of the group.

Health Providers Against Poverty, as part of the 25 in 5 Coalition to End Poverty, has called for a 25 per cent reduction in all poverty in Ontario within 5 years. Proposed initiatives include an immediate increase in the minimum wage and social assistance rates, universally affordable child care, and improved access to employment insurance. HPAP holds that major initiatives to reduce poverty represent an essential step toward improving the health of Ontarians.

“The long term health and economic impact of failing to take the required steps to reduce all poverty in Ontario will be huge, with astounding long term costs to the health and social support systems, and significant lost productivity. A strong investment in ending poverty for all would result in large long term savings. We hope this government will follow up these promises with a wider reaching poverty plan intended to truly tackle poverty for all vulnerable Ontarians – including especially single women, people of colour, and people living on social assistance,” said Gary Bloch, a physician in inner city Toronto.

Health Providers Against Poverty is a coalition of nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians, dietitians, and other front line health providers who work with people living in poverty. HPAP holds that poverty is the greatest reversible risk factor for ill health.

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