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Our universal healthcare is in crisis. Although the problem with public healthcare is nationwide, we are placing particular emphasis on the province of Ontario.

It is despicable the way seniors are treated in Ontario. The latest insult is the new legislation which allows a patient to be transferred to a long-term care facility, not of their choosing, up to 70 kilometers away, or 150 kilometers if they are in Northern Ontario.

In Sault Ste. Marie, some 3,000 patients were de-rostered at the Group Health Centre and then 10,000 more were to be de-rostered as of May 31, 2024. Many of the de-rostered members of the GHA were "supporters referred to as brickers" that actually participated in the building of the Group Health.

The method of de-rostering that the Group Health Centre is using will target seniors disproportionately. Since the seniors that built the Group Health are in all probability rostered with older doctors, when their doctor retires, they will cease to be members of the Group Health. That was absolutely not the intent nor was it the commitment made at the inception of the Group Health.

The Group Health Centre was built by Local 2251 and other Steelworker Locals. The members paid for the construction and provided the funding at the time. Now they are being de-enrolled from the Group Health itself, the facility they built.

Seniors do not want to be without primary care, warehoused in long term care homes without proper care up to 150 kilometers away from family and friends, or in long term care and hospital facilities with insufficient staff to provide care.

USW Local 2251 is attempting to create a coalition of voters comprised of seniors, relatives and friends to commit to voting as a block during our upcoming provincial election. The coalition we are attempting to establish will vote for government representation that will provide healthcare with dignity for seniors.

We are appealing to SOAR organizations, other Union Retiree Groups and Seniors in general to join our group to create a large voting block that will lobby and influence a political party to do the right thing and rebuild our universal healthcare system.

We will lobby for increased funding to hire more Personal Support Workers, more Registered Practical Nurses, more Registered Nurses, more Nurse Practitioners, and the accreditation of internationally trained doctors as an immediate solution and increase admissions and capacity to medical schools as a long-term solution, to provide healthcare for the citizens of Ontario.

By joining our mailing list, we ask that you commit to voting as a group.

To support our lobby efforts, please join our mailing list – Seniorsforhealthcare@gmail.com.

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