August 2, 2011

The Honourable Deborah Matthews
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

dmatthews.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

Dear Minister,

Re: Parking fees at Ontario hospitals

We write you today about the issue of parking fees at Ontario hospitals. We are concerned about the rising cost of parking at local hospitals. We believe that the hospitals should be not required to charge patients, their caregivers, visitors and staff ever-increasing amounts to meet budget targets. We think that this practice places an unacceptable burden on a captive market of the sick and aged populations of Ontario.

We have met with the local hospital CEO, Janet Beed, who believes that her facility is required by the HAPS prioritization schedule to maximize revenues from parking. Further, we have a letter from Kim Baker, CEO of the Central LHIN, declaring this to be a matter of hospital policy. We have been informed through the office of our MPP, Dr. Helena Jaczek, that the Ministry of Health has not mandated revenue generation from parking fees. There appears from these statements to be a real difference of opinion about whether or not parking fees must be a substantial revenue source for the hospitals.

We have prepared a web site at www.fairhospitalparkingcharges.org and refer you to it for background on our efforts.

We would like to understand how the parking charges became a revenue source for Ontario hospitals. Further, we believe the people of Ontario would like to be consulted on this matter of ethical treatment of our fellow citizens. A policy review may well be in order.

As the HAPS document, the LHINs and all Ontario health care facilities come under your authority, we would like an opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this issue.

We look forward to an early reply to our request.

With respect,

Alan Powell
Elizabeth Plashkes
John Hazlewood

cc. Dr. Helena Jaczek, MPP, Oak Ridges-Markham