

# Open the doors to P3 hospitals

I knew it was a good idea. Prior to the 2003 election the Progressive Conservatives advocated public-private partnerships referred to as P3 projects to build hospitals in Ontario. A P3 hospital had been approved for Brampton.

P3 projects refer to any mix of private and public funds, from a purpose-built coffee shop in the hospital to a private company leasing the completed building to the hospital board.

During the 2003 campaign the Liberals said they wouldn't use P3 arrangements to build hospitals because they believed that all health care should be publicly funded. Of course they were blithely ignoring the fact that most hospitals in Ontario were built from private contributions and that only about two-thirds of health care services are currently publicly funded, the other third is employee benefits, private insurance, drug purchases etc.

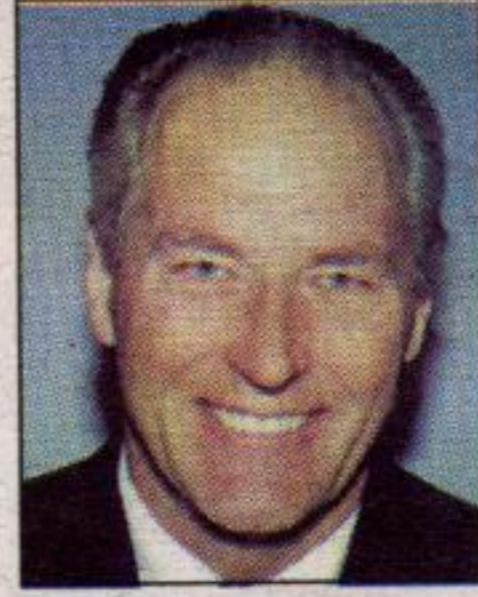
That aside, the Liberals were elected and dropped the P3 plans.

It seemed like they had kept a promise. Alas not, the Liberal government recently announced plans for a P3 hospital in Sault Ste. Marie.

Now of course they will play political games and deny it's a P3, but given the wide range of what P3 projects can look like and the private sector involvement in the construction of the new hospital, it's a P3.

Frankly more power to them on this one. With sky-high construction costs and huge pressures on our annual health

## QUEEN'S PARK REPORT



Ted Chudleigh

care budget a P3 makes sense if it saves provincial dollars which can be better spent providing health services to Ontarians. In the end it is about serving the health needs of all Ontarians without breaking the backs of taxpayers to do it.

Now the Liberals don't let me into their discussions, but I'd guess they looked at all the potential funding models and likely costs and decided a P3 was the best approach. After all, when I was in government, we looked at the same issues and made the same decision.

I only hope that the Liberals will continue to back away from unhelpful ideological hysteria when it comes to providing health care to Ontarians and open the doors to more P3 projects.

We are still waiting on an announcement of a new hospital in Oakville that could be sped up if the Liberals choose to apply their new approach to the project.

—Ted Chudleigh is the MPP for Halton

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