

Tories 'bent on ignoring lessons'

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complaints (about health care) at all. As far as hospital services are concerned, we would have no complaints at all. We couldn't be treated any better. We have nothing but praise for my husband's treatment. He's being well looked after."

But not everyone is pleased with the direction the Tories are steering health care. Newmarket resident Bill Chadwick is appalled with the Conservatives' push to further privatize the health system.

"Make no mistake, the Conservatives are bent on ignoring the lessons of other countries who have suffered the pain of profit-driven health care," said Mr. Chadwick, who is campaigning for York North Liberal candidate John Taylor.

The battle for the hearts of Ontario voters is being waged over health care, a mammoth and complex system struggling to care for the province's sick while eating up an ever-increasing chunk of the budget.

It is consistently the issue Ontarians and Canadians rank as their top concern.

York North PC candidate Julie Munro said York residents don't have to look far to see evidence of her party's commitment to health care.

All three of York Region's hospitals are in various stages of redevelopment, she noted. Ms. Munro said the Conservatives' pledge to health has gone beyond bricks and mortar to providing a growing list of services such as cardiac care, dialysis and cancer care locally.

She also pointed to Tory initiatives to attract doctors to chronically underserved areas like Georgina and East Gwillimbury.

But Oak Ridges Liberal candidate Dr. Helena Jaczek argued the Tories have had

eight years to reform health care.

And yet, she pointed out, cancer patients continue to wait unconscionable lengths of time for treatment, a million Ontario residents are unable to find a family doctor, Ontarians fret over the safety of their water and meat in the wake of the Walkerton disaster and Aylmer meat scandal and public health departments struggle to provide services following Tory downloading.

Dr. Jaczek stressed independent studies have confirmed health and social

services in York continue to receive among the lowest per capita provincial funding in Ontario.

Vaughan-King-Aurora NDP candidate Mike Seaward is also opposed to privatizing MRI and CT clinics, adding politicians, residents and medical providers must hammer out a consensus on the future of health care.

Although he was unable to address specifics, he suggested the NDP may be willing to hike taxes to retain public health and expand services.

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