



November 30, 2020

**PUBLIC STATEMENT SUPPORTING DISABILITY RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS
CONCERNING A CRITICAL CARE TRIAGE PROTOCOL**

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The Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination on the basis of age and disability, among other grounds.

We are advised that on March 28, 2020 the Ontario government sent out a critical care protocol to all Ontario hospitals that was later leaked, that included a direction allowing them to refuse critical care. This resulted in disability organizations expressing serious concerns that the Ontario government and hospitals were poised to discriminate against individuals protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code. The government has since revealed in the Ontario legislature that it had cancelled the critical care triage protocol – an action that SSAO applauds.

We are now calling on the Ontario government to replace this protocol with one that respects the human rights of all individuals to critical care irrespective of age and disability.

We are also calling on the government to publicly release the report and recommendations submitted by the Bioethics Table in September, 2020 that was provided to Ontario Health and to the Ontario Human Rights Commission. This is a matter of significant public interest, especially since the Ontario Human Rights Commission continues to express concerns with the Bioethics Table recommendations.

With the COVID-19 situation worsening, it is incumbent on the Ontario government to be transparent with the people of Ontario about the content of, and any plans to release a critical care triage protocol to hospitals and health care providers, especially one seeking to allow rationing of health care services specific to certain groups. We stand with disability rights groups in opposing this kind of discrimination based upon age, health status, or disability.

We also urge the Government of Ontario to consult with constitutional and human rights legal experts and allow disability and senior's organizations to have input into any protocol that is being considered or likely to be released.

We would appreciate a response to these requests no later than Tuesday, December 15, 2020.

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