

Letter to the Premier -- Robert Barkwell, MD, FCFP

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Dear Premier;

As a medical professional, I was delighted when you announced last fall that your government would not appeal the decision of the Court of Appeal in favour of the complainants, who had spent years fighting the long-term policy of the Department of Community Services to force them into institutional care. I was disappointed, but not surprised when that was reversed: it is always amazing how quickly the permanent bureaucracy is able to capture a new government and persuade it that the same old policy is the only reasonable alternative.

A policy that has been unequivocally condemned by the court, which is known to cause problems for the physical and mental health of the client, which essentially withdraws beds from other patients for years at a time, and which bears high, (though hidden) costs to the system, and which the Minister herself admits is a bad one, is clearly not a reasonable alternative at all. In the circumstances, appealing to the Supreme Court is not only likely throwing good money after bad, but is morally odious.

Premier, your initial reaction was morally and ethically correct, and I urge you to listen to your own conscience and reverse the decision to appeal

Sincerely,

Robert Barkwell, MD, FCFP