

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

Dear Minister Matthews,

I am writing to express my opposition to the plan by the Government of Ontario and Cancer Care Ontario to force Windsor Regional Hospital to send all thoracic cancer surgery patients out of our region to receive their surgeries.

The quality of care in Windsor is excellent. In addition, I feel that patient outcomes are enhanced when the patient's support network of family and loved ones are able to attend and assist with recovery.

Currently, two other hospitals in Ontario (Kingston and Thunder Bay) have been granted Level 2 exemptions. The rationale provided so far has been that the distance to a Level 1 hospital is excessive for patients in the Thunder Bay region, and that Kingston has a "teaching hospital". I would submit that the distance to London is also excessive, and Windsor also has the satellite campus of the Schulich Medical School. Further, it is also true that there are currently 6 hospitals in Ontario that are performing thoracic cancer surgeries that do not meet the volume requirements for Level 1 designation, as set out by Cancer Care Ontario.

Minister, I am urging you to treat Windsor and Essex County fairly, and to direct Cancer Care Ontario to grant a Level 2 exemption to Windsor Regional Hospital, so that Windsor/Essex patients can receive care in our community.

Respectfully,