

Agenda Item 6.2.i
June 4/19 Board Meeting

From: Keith Martin <Keith.Martin@cafii.com>

Sent: May-21-19 8:48 AM

Subject: Toronto Star Editorial -- CAFII Quote

Board, EOC, and CAFII Committee Members:

Below is an Editorial in the Toronto Star from today, that quotes CAFII on the issue of the Ontario government eliminating out-of-country OHIP coverage. I've highlighted the sections that references or relate to CAFII.

Thank you

Keith Martin

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<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2019/05/21/ready-fire-aim-the-fords-reckless-approach-on-cutting-costs.html>

Ready, fire, aim: the Ford's reckless approach on cutting costs

By **Star Editorial Board**

Tues., May 21, 2019

Another day, another example or three of the Ford government's inability to see even a couple of steps ahead as it goes about slashing services across Ontario.

The latest affects only a small number of people: dialysis patients who will no longer get any coverage under OHIP for the cost of treatment if they venture across the U.S. border.

The government is ending all out-of-country medical coverage for Ontarians, effective Oct. 1. People who rely on dialysis to cleanse their blood because of malfunctioning kidneys will be stranded. They need regular treatment so an end to all coverage hits them particularly hard.

That never occurred to the government, apparently. Health Minister Christine Elliott now says her officials will look at that and figure something out.

Maybe they will. But it isn't just dialysis patients. It's become distressingly clear that this government's approach in all sorts of areas amounts to cut first, ask questions later.

Whether it be kids with autism, students in high school music programs, people who rely on public health services, medical researchers or Toronto subway riders, the pattern is the same.

The government announces a spending cut that takes everyone by surprise and then stands back as those directly involved scramble to puzzle out what just happened.

If it turns out some people are well and truly screwed, in a way that even the government can't defend, it just might take another look. But the overriding priority is to get on with the cuts without so much as elementary notice or effective consultation.

In the case of the OHIP out-of-country cut, the government has managed to alarm even those who stand to be the biggest beneficiaries: private insurance companies.

After all, if Ontarians are no longer covered for any medical expenses outside Canada, they'll have even more reason to get private coverage.

In fact, the government justifies ending all out-of-country payments for exactly that reason. Its spurious logic goes like this: since OHIP coverage falls well short of what you'll actually have to pay if you end up in the U.S. medical system, we might as end all coverage and make you get private insurance.

Private insurers ought to be delighted; this should be a gift to them as Ontarians scramble for coverage even on short shopping forays over the border.

In fact, though, the group that speaks for them, called the Canadian Association of Financial Institutions in Insurance, issued a warning last week that the government is moving too fast and hasn't communicated the change effectively enough.

The government announced the change in late April, to go into effect Oct. 1. And it set aside only a six-day period for consultation with the industry.

As a result, say the insurance people, they don't have time to work out how much to charge for what kind of coverage and to train their employees to deal with anxious travellers looking for coverage. They want the government to make the change over a full year.

In fact, it's a bad policy, whether done in five months or 12. The fact that OHIP doesn't cover the full cost of medical care abroad is no argument for ending it. **If the provincial plans pays nothing, then travellers will obviously end up paying more for private coverage (something they should already be buying).**

In principle, too, it's wrong. On the face of it, it violates the portability principle of the Canada Health Act. There's a good reason why all other provinces extend medicare coverage to out-of-country travellers.

And in practice, it will save the government a very small amount — just \$11.8 million in a health budget of \$63.5 *billion*. The real issue the government should be tackling is the high cost of administering the program, something the province's auditor general recommended last year.

Ontarians deserve better. At the bare minimum they deserve a government that figures out the effects of its actions before it pulls the trigger.

From: Keith Martin <Keith.Martin@cafii.com>

Sent: May-17-19 4:44 PM

Subject: Summary Note on the Media Pickup of CAFII's Press Release on OHIP's Plan to Eliminate Coverage for Ontarians Traveling Out-of-Country, with Media Articles Attached

Hello CAFII Board, EOC, and CAFII Committee Members,

CAFII's press release on the planned elimination of OHIP coverage for Ontarians travelling out-of-country has generated a good level of coverage from media, including an article in the mainstream media outlet the Toronto Star, along with coverage in many industry press articles. The articles that are in industry publications that are widely viewed by members, regulators, and policy-makers are listed below – press the ctrl key and left-click on your mouse to be brought to the website page. I have also copied the first four articles listed below at the bottom of this email for your convenience. (By way of how industry press articles that largely repeat our press release are still impactful, today some of us had lunch with Glen Padassery, EVP Policy and Chief Consumer Officer, FSRA, and he mentioned that he saw the articles in his daily press clipping package today.) A short summary of and link to these articles will be posted on our website, in the News section.

| Publication | Journalist | Link |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Toronto Star | Rob Ferguson | https://www.thestar.com/politics/provincial/2019/05/16/dialysis-patients-cry-foul-over-end-to-ohip-coverage-outside-canada.html |
| Insurance Journal | IJ Staff | https://insurance-journal.ca/article/dropping-out-of-country-medical-coverage-too-quickly-may-put-ontarians-at-risk/ |
| Journal-assurance | Aurélia Morvan | https://journal-assurance.ca/article/lontario-ne-couvrira-plus-les-frais-medicaux-des-ontariens-en-voyage-a-letranger/ |
| Insurance Business Canada | Lyle Adriano | InsuranceBusinessMag |
| Yahoo Finance | News Section | https://finance.yahoo.com/news/ending-country-medical-insurance-too-114500822.html |

Below is further analysis from Canada News Wire, which found 16 English sites (see list below) posted our press release verbatim, with a total potential audience of over 1.3million people. On the French media side, 3 outlets posted our press release in French verbatim (see list below), with a total potential audience of over 360,000.

Pickup by CNW Media Partner Websites - Top Outlets

| Outlet Name | Location | Source Type | Industry | Potential Audience |
|--|---------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newswire.ca | Canada | cision | Media & Information | 348,934 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Business Journal | Canada | Trade Publications | Media & Information | 78,520 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Knights | Canada | Magazine | Policy & Public Interest | 57,235 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Insider | Canada | Financial News Service | Financial | 47,160 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Masthead | Canada | Trade Publications | Media & Information | 31,293 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ArnpriorToday.ca | Canada | Broadcast Media | Media & Information | 8,437 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Glengarry News | Canada | Newspaper | Media & Information | 8,028 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insider Tracking | Canada | Financial News Service | Financial | 7,631 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Tecumseth Free Press Online | Canada | Newspaper | Media & Information | 7,087 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Head and Hands | Canada | Blog | Policy & Public Interest | 6,391 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Venture Recon | Canada | Online News Sites & Other Influencers | Financial | 629 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shaw Connect | Canada | Online News Sites & Other Influencers | Media & Information | 9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Penticton Business | Canada | Online News Sites & Other Influencers | Business Services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One News Page Global Edition | Global | Online News Sites & Other Influencers | Media & Information | 433,131 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Insider: Markets Insider | United States | Online News Sites & Other Influencers | Financial | 271,130 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SOGOTRADE | United States | News & Information Service | Financial | 22,154 |

Snapshot report (2 hour report):

Ending Out-of-Country Medical Insurance Too Quickly May Put Ontario Consumers at Risk



English Story Number: C3582 Clear Time: May 16, 2019 7:45 AM ET

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Total Pickup 16 | Total Potential Audience 1,327,769 |
| Exact Match: 16 postings | Exact Match: 1,327,769 Visitors |
| Release Views & Hits 124 | Engagement Actions N/A |

Pickup by CNW Media Partner Websites - Top Outlets

| Outlet Name | Location | Source Type | Industry | Potential Audience |
|---|----------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
|  Newswire.ca | Canada | cision | Media & Information | 348,934 |
|  Le Carrefour de Québec | Canada | Newspaper | Media & Information | 10,389 |
|  L'annonceur.ca | Canada | Online News Sites & Other Influencers | Media & Information | 7,329 |

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Total Pickup | Total Potential Audience |
| 3 | 366,652 |
| Exact Match: 3 postings | Exact Match: 366,652 Visitors |
| Release Views & Hits | Engagement Actions |
| 71 | N/A |

Dialysis patients cry foul over end to OHIP coverage outside Canada

By [Rob Ferguson](#) Queen's Park Bureau
Thu., May 16, 2019

Patients on life-saving dialysis are crying foul over the Ontario government's plans to stop reimbursing the cost of treatments when travelling outside the country, saying the decision leaves them trapped at home.

OHIP currently compensates those undergoing dialysis — a process to cleanse toxins from the blood of people who have malfunctioning kidneys — \$210 a day while they are away from Canada. That is slated to end Oct. 1 when [emergency out-of-country coverage](#) of \$400 for all Ontarians is cut to save \$9 million a year as part of efforts to erase the provincial deficit within five years.

"The few of us who are well enough to travel ... must bear the full cost," dialysis patient Allison Knudsen told a news conference Thursday, noting the \$210 is less than the \$300 to \$750 U.S. she must spend on dialysis south of the border.

"In all my years of dialysis, I have tried many times, I have never been able to get medical insurance to cover my hemodialysis while out of the country," added Knudsen, who has worked as an artist and design consultant and lives in Courtice, east of Oshawa.

Health Minister Christine Elliott — who has previously advised Ontarians to get private travel medical insurance when they take vacations or business trips outside the country — acknowledged Thursday that there is a snag for dialysis patients in the elimination of coverage.

Elliott said her officials will consult with dialysis patients "to make sure they are able to travel and they are able to receive the coverage they need," but stopped short of any specific promises.

“I can’t make any definite statements on that right now,” she told reporters.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said this is the latest example of Premier Doug Ford’s government making “reckless” decisions to balance the budget.

“This is a serious challenge that people now have because of the fact that this minister of health and this government decided to cut first and plan later,” she said after raising concerns in the legislature’s daily question period.

“I suspect they are not going to reverse this, that they are going to say to folks on dialysis, ‘Too bad, so sad.’ What service is next? What condition is next on the chopping block?”

The Health Ministry could not immediately provide figures on how much of the \$9 million spent annually on reimbursing patients for emergency medical costs outside Canada goes toward dialysis patients, who often need treatments daily.

Meanwhile, a group representing travel medical insurance companies called on the Ontario government to delay the Oct. 1 deadline for ending out-of-country reimbursement, saying more time is needed to prepare for the change.

The decision “could result in many people travelling abroad without adequate insurance coverage,” said the Canadian Association of Financial Institutions in Insurance, whose members include insurance divisions of the major banks along with Canada Life and Manulife.

Another year is needed before the change takes effect to allow time for an effective public education campaign and to give the industry time to “determine what the new premium rates will be,” the group said in a statement, noting a three-day hospital stay in the United States can cost \$30,000 U.S.

“Even under the current situation ... many Ontarians travel outside Canada without adequate travel insurance and without realizing they are at risk of incurring catastrophic financial costs.”

Elliott said the government decided to scrap the out-of-country reimbursement because almost one-third of the cost of the \$9 million program — about \$2.8 million — goes to administrative costs.

“That is not providing good value to Ontario taxpayers,” she told MPPs, adding that for most people, travel medical insurance “is not expensive and is easily obtained.”

Rob Ferguson is a Toronto-based reporter covering Ontario politics. Follow him on Twitter: [@robferguson1](https://twitter.com/robferguson1)

LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE

Dropping out-of-country medical coverage too quickly may put Ontarians at risk

by [The IJ Staff](#) May 17, 2019 09:30 a.m.

The **Canadian Association of Financial Institutions in Insurance** (CAFII) says that many people could find themselves without adequate insurance if the Ontario government moves ahead too quickly with its decision to end OHIP’s emergency services coverage for Ontarians travelling outside Canada.

The government has set Oct. 1, 2019 as the implementation date to end OHIP's out-of-country coverage. However, CAFII says more time is needed to transition to this change – at least one-year.

A lengthier transition period would enable the government “to undertake a robust, multi-year communications campaign to inform Ontarians about the change and resulting implications.” More time would also allow the insurance industry “to determine what the new premium rates will be, and to ensure its employees are ready to communicate about the changes and properly serve their customers.”

“We believe a robust communications campaign by the Government that supplements what the insurance industry is already doing will be critical in mitigating the risk to the travelling public of this change in insurance coverage,” says **Keith Martin**, Co-Executive Director of CAFII. “That communications campaign should emphasize to Ontarians the importance of having travel health insurance in place before travelling outside Canada, so that they and their loved ones will have immediate access to emergency medical care and related assistance, and can avoid exposure to potentially catastrophic and life-altering financial costs.”

OHIP presently covers out-of-country inpatient services to a maximum of \$400 per day, and up to \$50 per day for emergency outpatient care. When these amounts are no longer covered by OHIP, “travel medical insurance will become even more important to have, and the cost will undoubtedly rise,” says Martin.

[Last month the Canadian Snowbird Association](#) estimated that travel medical insurance premiums would rise by 7.5% as a result of this change.

VIE ET COLLECTIF

L'Ontario ne couvrira plus les frais médicaux des Ontariens en voyage à l'étranger

par [Aurélia Morvan](#) 17 Mai 2019 11:00

Le gouvernement de l'Ontario a décidé que l'**Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP)**, l'équivalent de la RAMQ au Québec, ne couvrirait plus les frais médicaux d'urgence engagés par ses résidents en voyage à l'étranger. Cette décision pourrait entrer en vigueur dès le 1^{er} octobre prochain.

L'**Association canadienne des institutions financières en assurance (ACIFA)** demande un délai pour permettre à l'industrie de s'adapter et aux Ontariens d'être bien informés.

De nombreux Ontariens pourraient voyager à l'étranger sans assurance appropriée si le changement est mis en place « trop rapidement et sans plan de communication efficace », affirme l'association.

« Cette campagne de communication destinée aux Ontariens et aux Ontariennes doit souligner l'importance d'avoir une assurance maladie privée pour les déplacements à l'extérieur du Canada, afin qu'eux-mêmes et leurs proches aient un accès immédiat aux soins médicaux d'urgence et à l'aide connexe, et qu'ils puissent éviter d'être exposés à des coûts financiers potentiellement catastrophiques et bouleversants », dit **Keith Martin**, codirecteur général de l'ACIFA.

L'association estime que l'industrie de l'assurance voyage a « besoin d'une période de transition d'au moins un an » afin d'être en mesure d'offrir aux consommateurs « un niveau de protection élevé » lorsqu'ils voyagent à l'extérieur du Canada.

Avant même que le gouvernement ne prenne sa décision, la **Canadian Snowbird Association(CSA)** [avait exprimé son opposition au projet](#).

L'association, qui représente [les voyageurs canadiens hivernants](#), estimait qu'une telle suppression entraînerait une hausse des primes d'assurance voyage privée de l'ordre de 7,5 %. Une augmentation qui toucherait non seulement les *snowbirds* qui se rendent dans le sud pendant les mois d'hiver, mais également les Ontariens qui planifient des vacances en famille et les consommateurs frontaliers avec les États-Unis, affirmait la CSA.

Pour le moment, lorsqu'un Ontarien doit se faire soigner alors qu'il voyage à l'étranger, l'assurance maladie provinciale rembourse les consultations médicales sans dépasser le montant qu'elle aurait remboursé si la même consultation avait eu lieu en Ontario. L'OHIP couvre également des services d'urgence dans une certaine limite : jusqu'à 50 \$ par jour pour les patients non hospitalisés et jusqu'à 400 \$ par jour pour ceux dont l'état nécessite une hospitalisation.

Dans le cadre de ce programme, l'Ontario dépense 2,8 millions de dollars chaque année pour assurer l'administration d'environ 9 millions de dollars de demandes de règlement. Le gouvernement explique sa décision de mettre fin à son assurance maladie à l'étranger par le fait que cette dernière serait coûteuse tout en étant peu avantageuse.

« Les gens devraient faire en sorte de souscrire par eux-mêmes cette couverture, celle-ci pouvant être obtenue à moindre coût et leur fournir une indemnisation intégrale s'ils subissent des problèmes de santé en dehors du pays », a déclaré la ministre ontarienne de la Santé **Christine Elliott**, rapporte *La Presse canadienne*.

CAFII: Abruptly ending out-of-country medical insurance endangers Ontario consumers

by [Lyle Adriano](#) 17 May 2019

SHARE

The Canadian Association of Financial Institutions in Insurance (CAFII) has issued a statement in response to the Ontario government's decision to end out-of-country emergency services coverage through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

The trade group warned that suddenly discontinuing the OHIP's out-of-country coverage could leave many Ontarians travelling abroad without coverage – especially if the change is implemented too quickly and is not communicated properly to consumers.

Although the provincial government has set October 01, 2019 as the implementation date to end the out-of-country coverage, CAFII believes more time is needed – at least a one-year transition period. That period would allow the government to undertake a “robust, multi-year communications campaign” to inform Ontarians of the change.

The “transition period” also gives the insurance industry more time to set new premium rates in anticipation of the change and allow more travellers to purchase coverage. Both the government and the insurance industry can also take the opportunity to address the misconception that private insurance is not necessary for travel.

“We believe a robust communications campaign by the Government that supplements what the insurance industry is already doing will be critical in mitigating the risk to the travelling public of this change in insurance coverage,” said CAFII co-executive director Keith Martin. “That communications campaign should emphasize to Ontarians the importance of having travel health insurance in place before travelling outside Canada, so that they and their loved ones will have immediate access to emergency medical care and related assistance, and can avoid exposure to potentially catastrophic and life-altering financial costs.”

The CAFII also warned in its release that, currently, many Ontarians travel outside of Canada without adequate travel health insurance.