



FAIR Association of Victims for Accident Insurance Reform

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Submission to 2019 Pre-Budget Consultation

January 29, 2019

FAIR (Fair Association of Victims for Accident Insurance Reform) is a grassroots not-for-profit organization of MVA (Motor Vehicle Accident) victims who have been injured in motor vehicle collisions and who have struggled with the current auto insurance system in Ontario.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views and to point out what we believe to be important to achieve a better Ontario. Budgets are not just about a healthy economy but also about the health and well-being of all Ontarians.

Auto insurance is broken and in trouble in the province. The previous government unfairly prioritized the needs of insurers over the needs of traumatically injured people. All of the problems and costs of that failure to consider the outcome of 'helping' insurers is beginning to play out in the economy.

We now have a wild-west healthcare crisis where those traumatically injured on our roads and most in need of care cannot get what they need for recovery. This is for a variety of reasons but all under the heading of a dysfunctional auto insurance system whose delay and deny tactics have harmed many Ontarians and resulted in a back-logged court system since the deep cuts in 2010.

It's a system where medically unqualified adjusters with little to no training make medically important decisions that will affect the injured person's life in very intimate and life altering ways.

It is the unqualified but inordinately powerful adjuster that stands between the insurer benefits and the injured person's need for recovery resources and it is in that space where insurers make profits. Whether we believe it is a matter of insurer greed or incompetence, or just plain bad decision making, it is where the harm is done and where the decision to spend more on assessing injuries rather than on treatments is made.

It matters to all of us, the taxpayers, because when insurers don't pay, the taxpayer surely does. And that can't be more obvious than when we look at the jump in the number of individuals on our social system supports like OW, welfare and ODSP. This is where the unpaid car crash survivors find

themselves when insurers deny recovery resources and it is a place that is unprepared to deal with the traumatic injuries they've suffered. The more injured you are the less likely the public system has what one might need for recovery and those with very serious injuries or a brain injury are the most likely to get left behind. Access to timely treatment and better recovery should matter.

There are some very basic changes that can be made to better hold insurers accountable for the product they sell us but the system has a perennial problem of lack of regulatory follow-through. So, even if there are no changes in the making right now, things will continue to get worse for Ontario's patients who are stuck in what can only be called a private insurer hell that is disturbingly similar to the American privatized healthcare system.

Along the way to increasing the profitability of insurers Ontario abdicated their position of providing accessible healthcare to all citizens by abandoning car crash survivors. Much like the American private healthcare, Ontario's private auto insurance coverage for MVA patients is fraught with denials that have a huge price that patients must pay. Over time as insurers slashed coverage to keep premiums down more and more MVA victims must pay for their own medical treatments. And now MVA victims have no choice but to lean on the taxpayers for supports more than ever.

We'd ask that you consider that many of the social supports we have in place have become dumping grounds for insurers who don't want to pay. Insurers want the premium dollars but know that there is no downside for them when they increase their denials to increase their profits. Regulations without teeth and the removal of disincentives for insurers who behave badly has resulted in more and more of our taxpayer dollars going toward those injured on our roadways.

Despite the obligation of insurers to transfer funds to the province to cover some of these medical expenses, there's been no move in 13 years to recover those mounting costs by way of indexing the current transfer payment. Despite more than one warning from the Auditor General about the inadequacy of the transfer payment the previous government completely failed to recover the increased costs.

It's time Ontario holds insurers to account and ensures that they will pay the real costs of recovery. It's not time to lower premiums or slash coverage that will only serve to punish MVA survivors. It's time for insurers to come clean about where all the premium dollars have gone and why they continue to fail Ontario MVA survivors.

When insurers don't pay, the taxpayer does - How the Ontario taxpayer is subsidizing wealthy auto insurers: <https://goo.gl/tBHUwq>