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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Ontario Rehab Alliance, representing more than 4500 healthcare providers, is profoundly disappointed and worried by the Government of Ontario's proposed changes to standard Auto Insurance Benefits in last week's Budget.

"We worry about the future wellbeing of the 65,000 fellow Ontarians who are injured in motor vehicle crashes every year", says Laurie Davis, the association's Executive Director.

"These cuts to basic accident benefits will have a devastating effect on the most severely injured and their families. We will see injured Ontarians whose horrific crashes result in quadriplegia, severe brain injuries and amputations live the rest of their lives with little to no dignity. Their family's futures will be forever changed as they have to rededicate their lives to becoming full time caregivers in light of the deep cuts to the benefits."

Ms. Davis says that the Province's proposed cuts to accident benefits, the latest of many in the past few years, are a poorly informed response to insurer demands to slash their obligations to their customer to achieve the lower premiums the government has committed to. The ORA says that past changes have already resulted in enormous savings to insurers, demonstrated by insurers' own data, but that insurers are using their political influence and sacrificing their customers so as to exploit the Province's commitment to reduce premiums and increase their healthy profits.

"The Budget speech points out that drivers are able to buy optional benefits for better coverage. But few Ontario drivers understand their accident benefits or know the real cost of rehabilitation. With insurance, we don't know what we're covered for until we're hurt, and then it's too late. Minister Sousa must ensure that Ontario drivers get all the information they need to make informed choices that may alter the course of their lives if they are injured", says Ms. Davis.

The ORA is calling for a moratorium on the amendments pending a full public consultation, rather than solely considering the insurer perspective.

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