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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP OF CHAMPLAIN LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORK

LHINs Will Allow Greater Community Involvement In Local Health Care Decisions

OTTAWA – The McGuinty government today named the three founding board members of the Champlain Local Health Integration Network who will lead the start up of the network in their community. Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) will be responsible for planning, integrating and funding local health services to make it easier for patients to access the care they need.

“We are creating LHINs because local health services are best planned at the local level, by people familiar with the needs of a community,” said Monique Smith, the Parliamentary Assistant to Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman. “You can’t micromanage a \$33 billion health care system from an office in Toronto. We need local expertise from right across Ontario to help plan and co-ordinate health care services that are right for people in different communities.”

Smith today announced that Ottawa will be the location of the headquarters for the Champlain Local Health Integration Network. The LHIN includes Renfrew County, the City of Ottawa, and the Counties of Prescott and Russell, and Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. It also includes part of Lanark County and a section of Leeds and Grenville. The office is expected to open later this summer.

The Champlain LHIN is one of 14 being created in Ontario. LHINs are local entities designed to plan, integrate and fund local health services – including hospitals, community care access centres, home care, long-term care, mental health as well as addiction and community support services – within a specific geographic area.

Smith announced that Michel Lalonde of Ottawa will be the LHIN board chair, with Wilmer Matthews of Barry’s Bay and Joanne Poirier of Ottawa serving as founding board members. There will be a full complement of nine board members by the end of the year.

“Leadership is the key to making any significant system change work,” Smith said. “The founding board members for our LHINs have impressive records of service in their communities. They bring diverse leadership experience in the private and public sectors to the task of improving the way we manage our health care system.”

In his first official duty as chair, Lalonde announced that Dr. Robert Cushman been selected as the CEO.

“Bob is an outstanding leader with significant experience in the public health field,” said Morrison. “His experience will be vital as we establish the Champlain Local Health Integration Network.”

“I am delighted to have been chosen as the first CEO of the Champlain Local Health Integration Network,” Dr. Cushman said. “I have worked in public health in a variety of settings and I am looking forward to the challenge of bringing some of that experience to this new local health organization.”

The roles of LHINs will be phased in over time. Subject to the passage of legislation, they would begin by working with the local community and health care providers to set priorities and plan health services in their area. They would then move to integrating and co-ordinating local health services, and eventually, to determining and providing funding and resources.

“LHINs will make it easier for patients to access all of the different health services they need in their own communities, because these services will be co-ordinated in those communities,” said Smith.

This initiative is part of the McGuinty government’s plan to build a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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