

June 28, 2005
2005/nr-053

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP OF ERIE-ST. CLAIR LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORK

LHINs Will Allow Greater Community Involvement In Local Health Care Decisions

CHATHAM – The McGuinty government today named the three founding board members of the Erie-St. Clair 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 Peter Fonseca, 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.”

Fonseca today announced that Chatham will be the location of the headquarters for the Erie-St. Clair Local Health Integration Network. The LHIN, which includes the County of Lambton, Chatham-Kent, Essex County and the City of Windsor, is expected to open later this summer.

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

Fonseca announced that Mina Grossman-Ianni of Windsor will be the LHIN board chair, with David Wright of Forest and Mary Kwong Lee of Chatham serving as founding board members. The government proposes that each LHIN board would have a full complement of nine members by the end of the year.

“Leadership is the key to making any significant system change work,” Fonseca 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 her first official duty as chair, Grossman-Ianni announced that Gary Switzer has been selected as the CEO.

“Gary is an outstanding leader who has developed top performing teams focused on providing excellence in customer support,” said Grossman-Ianni. “His experience in launching groundbreaking ventures will be vital as we establish the Erie-St. Clair Local Health Integration Network.”

“I am delighted to have been chosen as the first CEO of the Erie-St. Clair Local Health Integration Network,” said Switzer. “I have worked in the telecommunications industry throughout the world and I am looking forward to the challenge of bringing some of that experience to Ontario’s health care system.”

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,” Fonseca said.

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.

- 30 -

For further information:

Members of the media:
David Spencer
Minister’s Office
(416) 327-4320

Dan Strasbourg
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
(416) 314-6197

Members of the general public: (416) 327-4327, or (800) 268-1154

This news release, along with other media materials, such as matte stories and audio clips, on other subjects, are available on our website at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca> under the News Media section.

For more information on achievements in health care, visit: www.resultsontario.gov.on.ca.

Version française disponible