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McGUINTY GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP OF SOUTH WEST LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORK

LHINs Will Allow Greater Community Involvement In Local Health Care Decisions

LONDON – The McGuinty government today named the three founding board members of the South West 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, 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 the health care services that are right for people in different communities.”

Fonseca today announced that London will be the location of the headquarters for the South West Local Health Integration Network. The LHIN, which includes the counties of Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford, Perth, Huron and Bruce, and the cities of London and Stratford, as well as part of Grey County, is expected to open later this summer.

The South West 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, community health centres as well as addiction and community support services – within a specific geographic area.

Fonseca announced that Norm Gamble of Meaford will be the LHIN board chair, with Janet McEwen of London and Kerry Blaggrave of Listowel 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 his first official duty as chair, Gamble announced that Tony Woolgar has been selected as the CEO.

“Tony is an outstanding leader who has more than 30 years of experience in health services management,” Gamble said. “His experience in organizational leadership and change management will be vital as we establish the South West Local Health Integration Network.”

“I am pleased to have been chosen as the first CEO of the South West Local Health Integration Network,” Woolgar said. “I have worked in the health care field in Great Britain and I am looking forward to 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,” said Fonseca.

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

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