

**For Immediate Release**

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## **McGUINTY GOVERNMENT TO HOLD CONSULTATION ON TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE**

*Talking To Ontarians About Regulating Practitioners*

**TORONTO** – The McGuinty government is enhancing protection for Ontarians who use traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture, with public consultation on the best and safest way to regulate practitioners, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“I have asked Tony Wong, our MPP for Markham, and three of my caucus colleagues to undertake the very important task of talking to the people of Ontario about regulating the practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine,” said Smitherman. “Our government is holding these consultations before we introduce legislation to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to have their say about making these services as safe as possible.”

The consultations take place in London on March 16, Markham on March 17, Mississauga on March 21 and Ottawa on March 24. MPPs Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence), Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East) and Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre) round out the four-member panel. They will be consulting with Ontarians about how best to regulate both traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture, to ensure safety while still allowing patients to benefit. The MPPs will report back to the minister on April 15, 2005.

“Traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture have been practiced for more than a thousand years and have proven to be an effective method for keeping people healthy and for treating various health ailments,” said Tony Wong, MPP Markham. “I am honoured to have been asked by Minister Smitherman to lead this group of MPPs working towards the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture in Ontario.”

The McGuinty government is fulfilling an election promise to regulate traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture. It is estimated there are up to 2,000 practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine, and approximately 1,500 regulated health practitioners who also provide acupuncture in Ontario.

Members of the public or healthcare providers, who wish to make a presentation must reserve a time for any of the upcoming consultations by calling (416) 212-7025.

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For further information:

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