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## **FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS BRINGING BETTER CARE TO NORTH BAY**

*McGuinty Government Approves New Team In North Bay*

**NORTH BAY** – The McGuinty government is providing better access to better health care in North Bay with the creation of a Family Health Team, part of the 52 Family Health Teams and three networks of Family Health Teams approved province-wide, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

Family Health Teams (FHTs) include doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and other health care professionals working together to provide comprehensive care day and night, seven days a week. This includes access by phone to a registered nurse. Physicians working in an inter-disciplinary team model can provide care for up to 52 per cent more patients than those working in a solo practice.

“We’re changing the way health care is delivered in North Bay by making it more responsive to the needs of the community,” said Smitherman. “More patients in this city will now have access to a family doctor and health team of their own to help keep them healthy and treat them when they get sick.”

Smitherman made the announcement at the Blue Sky FHT.

The Blue Sky FHT will include a core group of up to 13 physicians working with nurse practitioners and registered nurses. In addition, local health care providers and community leaders are proposing to include health professionals such as pharmacists, social workers, dietitians, nutritionists and others to meet the specific needs of North Bay. The Blue Sky FHT will work closely with the North Bay General Hospital, the Near North Palliative Centre, VON and other local health resources to ensure that residents receive comprehensive care.

Thirty-five of the new Family Health Teams will be located in communities designated as underserved with respect to family physicians.

“What this means is that thousands of so-called orphan patients, who do not have access to the most basic health care, will soon be receiving treatment not only from a doctor but from a whole team of dedicated health care professionals,” said Monique Smith, the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and MPP for Nipissing.

“This is exactly what a community like ours needs,” said Dr. Wendy Graham, lead physician with the Blue Sky FHT. “It provides patients with greater access to the care they need, and doctors and other health care professionals with more flexibility. My colleagues and I are excited about working together to deliver better health care opportunities in the community we serve.”

Today’s announcement is part of the McGuinty government’s comprehensive plan to improve health care in Ontario. It’s a plan that includes creating Family Health Teams, reducing wait times for key procedures, increasing the number of doctors and nurses, and investing heavily in community-based health care services to ease the pressure on hospitals and deliver health care where patients need it most — closer to home.

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