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FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS BRINGING BETTER CARE TO BARRIE

McGuinty Government Approves A Network Of Teams In Barrie

BARRIE – The McGuinty government is providing better access to better health care in Barrie with the creation of a network of Family Health Teams throughout the city, 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 Barrie 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 Central Simcoe Family Health Team, which will be part of the network of teams delivering care to patients in Barrie. The other two networks will be located in Hamilton and Peterborough.

The Barrie network of Family Health Teams will include a core group of up to 74 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, dieticians and others to meet the specific needs of Barrie. These health care professionals will provide comprehensive care and specialised services that include diabetic care, cardiac care, mental health and geriatric services to area residents. Barrie’s network of FHTs will work closely with the Royal Victoria Hospital, local seniors’ homes and many other local health resources to ensure that residents receive the best care possible.

“This initiative has been very well-received across the province,” said Smitherman. “In fact, enthusiasm is so strong right here in Barrie that several FHTs will band together in a network of FHTs. These teams will work together to best meet the needs of patients in their community.”

Thirty-five of the new FHTs 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 Smitherman.

“The Family Health Team will allow family physicians to enhance the care they provide to their patients through increased access to other health care professionals. That continuity of care is especially important for patients facing complex medical conditions such as diabetes, congestive heart failure and chronic obstructive lung disease,” said Dr. Anne Duvall, Royal Victoria Hospital’s Chief of Family Practice and lead physician for the Barrie network of Family Health Teams. “We hope to develop a leading edge, integrated health system that will attract much needed family physicians to Barrie.”

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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