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FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS BRINGING BETTER CARE TO PETERBOROUGH *McGuinty Government Approves A Network Of Teams In Peterborough*

PETERBOROUGH – The McGuinty government is providing better access to better health care in Peterborough 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 Peterborough 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 Royal Garden Retirement Residence, a local institution whose residents will be served by the network of teams in Peterborough. The other two networks will be located in Hamilton and Barrie.

The Peterborough network of FHTs will be made up of the Peterborough Palliative Plus FHT, the Greater Peterborough FHT (Chemong), the VON Havelock-Belmont-Methuen FHT, the Peterborough Clinic FHT and the Peterborough Medical Centre FHT. This network will include a core group of up to 65 physicians working with nurse practitioners and registered nurses. In addition, local health care providers and the community are proposing to include other health care professionals such as nutritionists, pharmacists, chiropodists, and physiotherapists. The FHTs will work closely with the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, local Community Care Access Centre, local public health unit, and other local health care resources to ensure that residents receive comprehensive care.

“This initiative has been very well-received across the province,” said Smitherman. “In fact, enthusiasm is so strong right here in Peterborough 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.

“This is exactly what a community like ours needs,” said Dr. Don Harterre, lead physician with the Peterborough network of FHTs. “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.

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

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