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BETTER ACCESS TO BETTER CARE FOR STRATFORD RESIDENTS

*McGuinty Government Supporting Redevelopment At
Stratford General Hospital Site, Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance*

STRATFORD – The McGuinty government today announced that it is improving health care services for the people of Stratford and area by giving the go ahead to the Stratford General Hospital site of the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance to implement their capital project in 2006-2007. John Wilkinson, MPP (Perth-Middlesex) announced today on behalf of Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman and Public Infrastructure Renewal Minister David Caplan.

“Our government is ensuring that people in all areas of the province have access to the health care they need, and that includes the highest quality local hospitals,” said Mr. Wilkinson. “I’m pleased to announce that Stratford will soon have even better hospital facilities to serve the needs of area residents.”

This commitment will enable the hospital to proceed with construction and renovation to expand its emergency department, intensive care unit, surgical suite, diagnostic imaging, maternal child unit and mental health services. The government has planned for Stratford to begin construction in the 2006-07 provincial fiscal year, using a traditional financing approach.

“This project would not be possible without the strong support of our local MPP, John Wilkinson, our Minister of Health and Long Term Care, George Smitherman, and the entire McGuinty Government,” said Alliance Board Chair Ron Bolton. “The Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance, which includes sites in Clinton, St. Marys, Seaforth and Stratford, is a strong proponent of the government’s transformation agenda. These new facilities will strengthen our ability to be a leader in reducing wait times and improving access to needed, hospital-based services.”

“This project will modernize and double the size of our Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit and will expand and modernize Huron-Perth’s most comprehensive surgical service,” said Alliance CEO Andrew Williams. “Furthermore, Perth’s only In-Patient Mental Health Unit will be enlarged, modernized and made safer, and our Maternal Child Unit will expand to meet the increasing demands now faced.”

The Stratford General Hospital’s capital project is being cost-shared between the government and the hospital. It is one of several hospital projects approved under ReNew Ontario, the government’s five-year, \$30-billion infrastructure investment plan, which commits \$5.3 billion to health care infrastructure.

ReNew Ontario is a comprehensive plan to modernize and replace many of the province’s hospitals, schools and post-secondary institutions. It will also support the provincial economy through investments in transportation, transit and research and by accommodating growth.

“This hospital capital project is part of our government’s plan to help ensure Ontarians have the high quality services they need and deserve,” said David Caplan, the Minister of Public Infrastructure

Renewal. “For the first time, this province has a long-term plan for building and developing our hospitals that will bring much needed stability and certainty to hospitals and better health care for Ontarians.”

“Our government has a vision of a health care system that will help keep Ontarians healthier, get them good care when they are sick, and that will be there for their children and grandchildren,” said Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman. “Upgrading and modernizing our hospitals is critical to making that vision a reality.”

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

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Members of the media:

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 1-800-268-1154

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