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## **MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT REDUCING WAIT TIMES FOR MRI EXAMS IN BARRIE** *Replacing Old MRI At Royal Victoria Hospital With New, More Efficient Machine*

**BARRIE** – Barrie and area residents will have better access to better care, thanks to the new MRI machine that has been delivered to Royal Victoria Hospital, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“People suffering from significant health problems should not have to wait long periods of time to be diagnosed,” Smitherman said. “This new machine is more technologically advanced, which means that more people in this area will receive the procedures they need when they need them.”

Because of its increased efficiency, the new MRI will deliver an additional 2,800 exams per year.

“This is great news for patients in the Barrie area,” added Smitherman. “For people receiving these scans who get a clean bill of health it will mean quick peace of mind. For others it may mean a fighting chance against a disease like cancer where early detection is vital.”

“I’m thrilled with the arrival of our new MRI,” said Dr. Paul Voorheis, Clinical Director of Imaging Services at Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie. “The replacement of our MRI machine will greatly increase our ability to meet the needs of our patients. The ministry’s support will better enable us to improve patient care and reduce wait times for important diagnostic procedures such as MRI exams.”

In February, the Health Minister announced an investment of \$21 million to replace old MRI machines with newer more efficient equipment. The new MRI at Royal Victoria Hospital is one of seven replacement MRIs that will deliver 18,581 additional exams in 2005/2006. Since coming to office, the McGuinty government has increased the number of MRI scans delivered to Ontarians by 42 per cent.

For the first time ever, this hospital equipment was purchased in bulk to secure the best possible price, resulting in a 25 per cent savings to taxpayers.

“Patients expect and deserve the best possible health care,” said Smitherman. “We are providing Ontarians with faster access to better health services, to reduce their pain and suffering and keep them healthier, longer.”

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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