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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT IMPROVING HEALTH SERVICES AT SUNNYBROOK AND WOMEN'S COLLEGE

New Structure And Roles Emphasize Excellence For The Benefit Of Patients

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is improving health services for babies, women and people waiting for hip and knee surgery with a three-point plan for Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“Our number one priority must always be delivering the best possible care to patients,” Smitherman said. “Our plan does exactly that, for precious newborn babies and their mothers, for people needing hip and knee surgeries, and with a greater focus on women's health in general.”

The three-point plan includes:

- Transferring the perinatal and gynaecological program currently at Women's College to Sunnybrook's Bayview site in order to ensure the best possible care for newborns and their mothers. Also, providing the go-ahead and funding to Sunnybrook to expand its M-wing to accommodate the program, renovate and expand its emergency department, and undertake other infrastructure upgrades.
- Making Sunnybrook's Orthopaedic and Arthritic Institute a Centre of Excellence for hip and knee joint replacements and increasing the number of surgeries performed at the Wellesley site, leading to reduced wait times and improved patient care.
- Restoring independent governance for Women's College. Women's College would assume a new role as an ambulatory care centre, and become a provincial leader in women's health care, education and research.

“This plan is about tapping into the excellence that defines both Sunnybrook and Women's College,” Smitherman said. “It is about allowing them to do what they do best, and improving services for the benefit of all Ontarians.”

Smitherman announced the appointment of former Ontario Health Minister Elinor Caplan to be the lead on the governance, program and financial aspects of the plan, and Carleton University Law professor Diana Majury who will help define a new vision, role, and objectives for the new Women's College.

The Health Minister also thanked Dr. Jack Kitts, CEO of the Ottawa Hospital, for his recent report on Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre. The Perinatology and Gynaecology Program Review recommended that the maternal/newborn and gynaecological program be transferred to the Bayview site.

"Sunnybrook & Women's is delighted with this announcement and would like to thank the McGuinty government and Minister Smitherman for this important investment in the future of the hospital and the Ontario healthcare system," said Virginia McLaughlin, Chair of Sunnybrook & Women's Board of Directors. "These projects will improve the health of women across Ontario and achieve the government's mandate to decrease wait times and increase access to life-saving care."

"We're pleased that Women's College has been given this opportunity to ensure the revitalization of 76 Grenville and to create a bigger future and a healthier one for the women of Ontario," said Carol Cowan, Chair, Board of Directors of Women's College. "We're especially pleased that the development of a new Women's Health Institute will allow Women's College to continue its leadership in women's health, research, teaching and care."

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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