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BETTER ACCESS TO BETTER CARE FOR KITCHENER-WATERLOO RESIDENTS *McGuinty Government Supporting New Expansion Project At Grand River Hospital*

KITCHENER – The McGuinty government today announced that it is improving health care services for the people of Kitchener-Waterloo by giving the go ahead to redevelop and renovate at the Grand River Hospital, Kitchener Centre MPP John Milloy announced today on behalf of Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman.

“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 Milloy. “I’m pleased to announce that Waterloo Region will soon have even better hospital facilities to serve the needs of area residents.”

The project is currently estimated to cost about \$72 million and is being cost-shared between the government, the hospital, the Region of Waterloo and community fundraisers.

Once the project is completed, mental health patients will have access to up to 50 beds at the Freeport site. In addition, this investment will allow for an increase of up to 30 beds to support the cancer centre at the Kitchener-Waterloo site. As well, patients at the Kitchener-Waterloo site will have greater access to acute adult mental health services, a new 12-bed child and adolescent inpatient mental health program, an upgraded intensive care unit, operating rooms and diagnostic imaging and ambulatory care departments.

Construction of Grand River Hospital’s project is slated to begin in 2007-2008.

"I'm delighted the government is supporting our hospital's plan to meet the increasing demands of the residents of Waterloo Region, one of the fastest growing communities in Southwestern Ontario," says Dennis Egan, president and CEO. "This will allow patients access to the very best in hospital care."

The Grand River project is one of several approved under ReNew Ontario, the government’s five-year, \$30-billion infrastructure investment plan, which commits \$5 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.

“Investments in modern hospital infrastructure are investments in modern patient care services,” said Hilary Short, President and CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association. “The government’s ReNew Ontario plan is making it possible for many hospitals to move forward with much-needed capital improvements to facilities that, across Ontario, average 43 years old.”

“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.”

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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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