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HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS FAMILY HEALTH TEAM IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE IN HALIBURTON AND SURROUNDING AREAS

New Nurse Practitioner Joining the Team

HALIBURTON – The McGuinty government is further expanding the range of services that will be available at the Haliburton Highlands Family Health Team by providing funding for a nurse practitioner, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“We are creating Family Health Teams because we know they’re going to mean better access to better care for Ontarians,” Smitherman said. “The Haliburton FHT is going to offer one-stop shopping for different health services to the people of Haliburton and surrounding areas, and that’s what it’s all about.”

The Haliburton Highlands Family Health Team includes a core group of eight physicians practising in Haliburton village, providing care to about 8,000 patients. It is part of the first wave of 69 FHTs (52 individual teams plus three networks that include 17 FHTs) announced last April. The second wave will be announced this Fall, and 150 will have been created by 2007-2008.

The addition of a nurse practitioner will improve access to health care services for about 800 more people who do not have a family doctor. The nurse practitioner will also provide health promotion and education to an additional 2,000 people in the community through workshops, lectures and health fairs.

The nurse practitioner will deliver services out of the Family Health Team office in Haliburton village and the Minden Community Health Care wing of the Haliburton Highland Health Services in Minden Hills. Outreach services will also be provided weekly in Wilberforce.

“Hiring a nurse practitioner is a critical first step in the development of our regional Family Health Team,” said Beth Archibald, Acting Director, Haliburton Highlands Family Health Team. “This will begin to improve access in communities such as Minden, Haliburton and surrounding areas.”

Family Health Teams are designed around the needs of each community. They can include physicians, nurse practitioners and nurses, working with other health care providers such as dietitians, pharmacists, physician specialists, mental health workers and many others - depending on the need.

Family Health Teams also provide comprehensive care 24 hours, seven days a week. After hours, patients can call a registered nurse through the Telephone Health Advisory Service.

“Family Health Teams are the next evolution in primary health care services and are changing the way health care is being delivered in Haliburton and right across the province,” Smitherman said. “They mean a stronger health care system now and for generations to come.”

The FHT 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 improving access to doctors and nurses.

-30-

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