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## **FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE IN HAMILTON AND SURROUNDING AREAS**

*Hamilton FHT Open For Business, With Expanded Mental Health And Nutrition Services*

**HAMILTON** –The Hamilton Family Health Team is open for business and providing better health care to Hamilton residents by offering the services of seven Dietitians and four Mental Health Counsellors, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today. The Hamilton Family Health Team is a network that includes 109 doctors working in nine individual Family Health Teams.

“We are creating Family Health Teams because we know they’re going to mean better access to better care for Ontarians,” Smitherman said. “The nine groups that make up the Hamilton Family Health Team are going to offer a range of health services – including Dietitians and Mental Health Counsellors – to the people of Hamilton and surrounding areas, and that’s what it’s all about.”

Today’s announcement is an important step in the development of the Hamilton Family Health Team. In addition to the Mental Health Counsellors announced today, the team will soon be joined by a further 19 Mental Health Counsellors. Together, they will provide health services to 158,000 additional patients.

The Hamilton Family Health Team network is made up of:

- Core Care Family Health Team located in Hamilton
- Escarpment Family Health Team located in Hamilton
- Hamilton Downtown Medical Centre Family Health Team located in Hamilton
- Hamilton Community Health Centre Family Health Team located in Hamilton
- Innovations Family Medicine Family Health Team located in Hamilton
- Intramed Family Health Team located in Hamilton
- Ottawa-Sherman Family Health Team located in Hamilton
- Rosedale Medical Group Family Health Team located in Hamilton
- Stoney Creek and Hamilton Mountain Family Health Team located in Stoney Creek

The Hamilton Family Health Team 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.

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 a day, seven days a week. After hours, patients can call a registered nurse through the Telephone Health Advisory Service.

“We are really excited that so many Hamilton doctors are participating the Hamilton Family Health Team,” said Dr. Ken Burgess, Lead Physician, Hamilton Family Health Team. “And we are doubly pleased to be increasing the number of Dieticians and Mental Health Counsellors in Hamilton so that the very successful Mental Health and Nutrition Program can be made available to the Family Health Team.”

“Family Health Teams are the next evolution in primary health care services and are changing the way health care is being delivered in Hamilton 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.

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