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FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE IN MILTON AND SURROUNDING AREAS

Prime Care FHT Opens for Business, Adds Nurse Practitioner and Mental Health Worker

MILTON –The Prime Care Family Health Team is open for business and providing better health care to Milton area residents by adding the services of a nurse practitioner and a mental health worker, 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 Prime Care Family Health Team is offering a range of health services – including services of a nurse practitioner and a mental health worker – to the people of Milton and surrounding areas, and that’s what it’s all about.”

The nurse practitioner and mental health worker will handle over 3,000 patient visits per year. They are now working at the Team’s temporary location until the official opening of their offices in the Bronte Professional Building, scheduled for June 2006.

Today’s announcement is an important step in the development of the Prime Care Family Health Team which now features a core group of three doctors, one nurse practitioner and one mental health worker. The Team plans to recruit more doctors and other health professionals in the months to come and is looking to include some visiting specialist services in the future to reduce long wait times and provide better coordinated care.

The Prime Care 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.

“The nurse practitioner and mental health worker are the first of several additional health care professionals the Prime Care Family Health Team plans to add so that we can serve more patients,” said Dr. Garnet Maley, Lead Physician, Prime Care 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 Milton 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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