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## **MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT EXPANDING COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES**

*New Centres, Increased Funding Mean Better Access To Primary Care And Stronger Communities*

TORONTO — The McGuinty government is investing in 22 new Community Health Centres and 17 new satellite CHCs across the province to improve access to primary health care and strengthen communities, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“Health care is about more than treating illness, it’s also about addressing the underlying conditions that contribute to healthy lives and healthy communities, and Community Health Centres are one of the best vehicles for doing that,” Smitherman said. “These new CHCs and satellite CHCs will offer programs and services designed specifically for their communities.”

Today’s announcement of \$74.6 million in funding over three years is the largest-ever expansion of Ontario’s Community Health Centre system. In addition to the new centres and satellites CHCs (local community branches of the centres), existing CHCs across the province will receive extra funding for staffing and program enhancements.

CHC teams include physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, counsellors, community workers and dietitians. CHCs also offer a wide range of programs in addition to health services. Existing CHCs offer services such as youth peer support programs, programs to address violence, youth leadership training and skills development, parent and child programs, outreach to isolated seniors,

The CHC is a highly effective model of primary health care, and is of particular value to people who face access barriers.

One new CHC and eight new satellite CHCs will be funded for Toronto neighbourhoods, particularly in at-risk communities identified in the City of Toronto and the United Way of Greater Toronto’s *Strong Neighbourhoods Report*. Once this expansion is complete, every community identified in the report will have a CHC or satellite CHC. In these neighbourhoods, the centres form a vital part of the network of community services offering programs to combat problems like gun violence.

“These new centres will become an integral part of our neighbourhoods, bringing vital services and people together,” said Children and Youth Services Minister and Scarborough East MPP Mary Anne Chambers. “The establishment of CHCs in at-risk neighbourhoods will help provide much-needed supports for youth, young children and their families.”

Currently, over 300,000 Ontarians benefit from the services offered at 54 existing CHCs and 10 satellite CHCs across the province. Boards of directors, composed of clients, recognized community leaders and respected health and social service providers, design programs and services to meet the specific needs and priorities of the populations they serve.

“Today’s announcement demonstrates the McGuinty government’s profound commitment to quality primary health care for individuals and communities facing barriers to access,” said Association of Ontario Health Centres President Denise Brooks. “The additional program funding allows centres to work proactively with their communities to produce improved health outcomes and healthier communities.”

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.

- 30 -

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