

For Immediate Release
December 1, 2005/nr-118

**MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS
2006 INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE IN TORONTO**
\$1.5 Million Committed To AIDS 2006 Toronto Host Secretariat

TORONTO — The McGuinty government is providing \$1.5 million to the AIDS 2006 Toronto Host Secretariat in support of the XVI International AIDS Conference to take place in Toronto next year, Health and Long-Term Care Minister, George Smitherman announced today.

“We are all affected by the devastating nature of HIV and AIDS,” said Smitherman. “This funding will be used to support the core operations of the conference and help ensure that Ontarians have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from this very important conference.”

The International AIDS 2006 Conference is the largest and most comprehensive conference in the global fight against HIV/AIDS. The conference brings community and science together for a global response to HIV/AIDS through increased commitment, leadership and accountability.

After years of decline in the early 1990s, infection rates in Ontario and Canada have been rising in recent years. In Ontario, the HIV infection rate in 2004 was almost 40 per cent higher than it was in 2000. Globally, HIV/AIDS continues to devastate, with five million new infections in 2005.

The McGuinty government recognizes the severity of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and has increased funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and support to more than \$54 million annually. This funding supports a wide variety of programs including education and support programs, the Ontario HIV Treatment Network, anonymous testing sites, a provincial hotline offering counseling and referral services, outpatient clinics, supportive housing for people living with HIV/AIDS, and support for the 2006 International AIDS Conference.

“The ongoing commitment to end the spread of HIV/AIDS is of the utmost importance,” said Darryl Perry, Executive Director, AIDS 2006 Toronto Local Host Secretariat. “This funding from the province will help bring us one step closer to reaching that goal.”

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-

Media Contacts:

David Spencer
Minister’s Office
416-327-4320

David Jensen
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 416-327-4327, or 1-800-268-1154

This news release, along with other media materials, such as matte stories and audio clips, on other subjects, are available on our website at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca> under the News Media section.

For more information on achievements in health care, visit: www.resultsontario.gov.on.ca.

Disponible en français.