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## **MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES LOCAL FAMILY HEALTH TEAM** *Kirkland Lake Joins Haileybury As Site For Second Timiskaming Team*

**KIRKLAND LAKE** – The McGuinty government today announced a new Family Health Team for Kirkland Lake. The new Family Health Team proposes to have up to 12 physicians and a mix of other providers including nurse practitioners and registered nurses.

“I’m delighted that we’re putting another Family Health Team in Timiskaming,” said George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. “The new Family Health Team in Kirkland Lake is one of 31 announced today that will provide better health care for thousands of Ontario families.”

Family Health Teams are designed around the needs of each community. They are made up of doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, physician specialists, mental health workers and many others – depending on the need. These teams also provide comprehensive care around the clock, seven days a week. After hours, patients can call a registered nurse through the Telephone Health Advisory Service.

“We’re very, very pleased about this announcement,” said Hal Fjeldsted, CEO of Kirkland and District Hospital. “It’s a challenge trying to recruit and retain physicians. This will provide us with the support we need. I’m confident that this will also provide much-needed access to services for patients without a family doctor.”

The Haileybury Family Health Team, announced in April, presently has five physicians, a nurse practitioner and a nurse. They propose to add more health care providers to help increase access to approximately 8,000 patients.

“Our team has been a great success for patients and providers,” said Dr. Peter Hutten-Czapski, lead physician for the Haileybury Family Health Team. “With today’s announcement, we’re happy to hear that even more people can benefit from the teams.”

Family Health Teams offer advantages to health care providers and the patients they serve. They improve access to care since doctors working in a group practice are able to see more patients than those in a solo practice. Doctors benefit from the support of their colleagues when they are away and during extended hours, while nurse practitioners, nurses and other health care professionals play an expanded role in caring for patients.

Today's announcement means there now are 100 Family Health Teams in Ontario, two thirds of the 150 the government will have created by 2007/08. This second wave of Family Health Teams will include over 250 doctors and is expected to include approximately 225 other practitioners, serving an estimated 500,000 patients in communities across Ontario.

"The Family Health Teams announced today will improve access to health care across the province and right here in our community," said David Ramsay, MPP for Timiskaming-Cochrane. "Family Health Teams are a great example of how Ontario continues to lead the way in primary health care renewal."

The first Family Health Teams were announced last April. These teams are busy becoming operational, and are at different stages of implementation. When they are all fully up and running they could include as many as 650 doctors and approximately 600 other practitioners, and are expected to serve 1.2 million patients.

"The interest in Family Health Teams continues to grow among health care professionals and communities," said Dr. Jim MacLean, executive lead for primary health care with the ministry's Health Results Team. "This growth is a great sign for patients who will be able to access the health care services they need and deserve."

The Minister also announced that applications for the final wave of 50 Family Health Teams are now being accepted.

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 improving access to doctors and nurses.

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