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## **MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT REDUCING WAIT TIMES, IMPROVING PATIENT CARE** *Investing In New And Better Diagnostic And Medical Equipment*

TORONTO — The McGuinty government is providing better access to better care for Ontarians by investing an additional \$83.5 million in diagnostic and medical equipment, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“We are reducing wait times and improving the delivery of health care in Ontario,” Smitherman said. “These investments will improve patient care, enhance patient safety and create better working environments for all health care workers.”

Today’s announcement includes:

- \$29 million for the purchase of mechanical patient/resident bed lifts for hospitals and long-term care homes
- \$20.9 million for equipment in hospital laboratories
- \$12 million to replace ambulances and equipment
- \$7.2 million for wound care, pain management and safety equipment in long-term care homes
- \$6.9 million to replace old CT scanners with new more, efficient technology
- \$6.3 million for telemedicine and teleradiology equipment in hospitals. This will help more patients to have their conditions diagnosed, monitored, and treated closer to home
- \$1.0 million for Community Health Centres for exam tables, electrocardiograms, defibrillators and ultrasound machines that will improve patient care by upgrading and enhancing existing medical diagnosis and treatment equipment
- \$200,000 to upgrade diagnostic and medical equipment in Aboriginal Health Access Centres.

“Today’s announcement represents an innovative future investment in new diagnostic equipment,” said Joseph Mapa, President & CEO, Mount Sinai Hospital. “Specifically, our laboratory will be better equipped to continue providing high quality testing and increase capacity to adapt to rising patient volumes. As well, a new state-of-the-art CT scanner will allow our team to perform more exams daily, meaning faster diagnosis of diseases such as cancer, and shorter waiting times.”

This funding is part of the federal Diagnostic and Medical Equipment Fund, which provided \$198.3 million to the Ontario government in 2005-06. Today’s investment is in addition to the \$74.8 million announced in October of this year for cancer radiation and diagnostic equipment. Additional funding for physician-based diagnostic assessment equipment will be allocated in the coming weeks.

“We welcome the government’s investment in diagnostic and medical equipment funding,” said Karen Sullivan, Executive Director of the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA). “This initiative will help long-term care homes provide better care for our residents and ensure a safer work environment for our staff.”

"The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) is very pleased that the government continues to invest in improving working conditions for nurses and ensuring better, safer care for patients," said Doris Grinspun, Executive Director of the RNAO. " The additional patient lifts and new, modern medical and diagnostic equipment will help prevent on-the-job injuries to nurses and provide higher quality of care to patients."

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.

- 30 -

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