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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT INVESTS IN EATING DISORDER TREATMENT PROGRAMS *Funding Will Support Existing Hospital And Community-Based Services*

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is supporting treatment programs for people with eating disorders by investing an additional \$4.5 million -- \$2 million this year and a further \$2.5 million next fiscal year -- Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“This investment demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that people who have eating disorders get the treatment they need, quickly and close to home,” said Smitherman. “Eating disorders can lead to serious health problems for both women and men, and we will continue to invest in programs that prevent and treat these illnesses.”

The investment announced today – during Eating Disorder Awareness Week – is going to be distributed to 18 hospitals that provide specialized treatment programs for children, youth and adults with eating disorders. Funding is also being provided to the Bulimia Anorexia Nervosa Association, which offers specialized education and support services to help prevent eating disorders and support people and families who are affected by them.

The \$2-million investment this year represents a funding increase of 20 per cent, and means the government now is providing \$11.6 million annually to eating disorder treatment programs across the province. Next year’s investment of \$2.5 million is aimed at increasing intensive treatment services in this specialized area.

“The provincial network of eating disorder treatment providers appreciates the ministry’s investment to help stabilize services and prevent the loss of highly skilled staff. We look forward to our continued collaboration with the ministry to develop continued capacity to meet the heavy demand for specialized eating disorder services in Ontario”, said Dr. Gail McVey, Director, Ontario Community Outreach Program for Eating Disorders.

“We are overjoyed with the announcement of today’s funding. This means that as the central intake for persons with eating disorders in the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network, we will now be able to hire more staff to address the needs of about 125 people requiring intensive specialized treatment for eating disorders in Windsor Essex and Chatham Kent,” said Mary Kaye Lucier, Executive Director of Bulimia Anorexia Nervosa Association.

“Our government recognizes the important role these services play in maintaining and improving the health of Ontarians with this complex disorder,” Smitherman said. “Today’s investment will enhance the commitment we have made so far to helping people across Ontario lead active and healthy lives.”

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.

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