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## **MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT EXPANDING ACCESS TO LONG-TERM CARE** *Additional 204 Interim Long-Term Care Beds Will Relieve Pressure on Hospitals*

MIDLAND – The McGuinty government is awarding an additional 204 interim long-term care beds across Ontario to expand services to people who no longer need acute hospital care and relieve pressure on hospitals, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today at Huronia District Hospital in Midland.

“Our government is making this investment so that people in Midland and throughout Ontario can receive the health care they need in the setting that suits them best,” said Smitherman. “These investments will make the best use of our health care resources and free up our hospitals to provide the kind of acute care they are designed to deliver.”

The interim long-term care beds awarded today are part of the McGuinty government’s \$29.2-million Alternative Levels of Care strategy announced in February 2005. Interim long-term care beds are for people who no longer need acute care, but live in communities with shortages of permanent long-term care beds. Patients being discharged from hospital are cared for in interim long-term care beds until a permanent long-term care bed becomes available.

“These interim beds provide the space required to help serve the patients of Simcoe County on an interim basis until appropriate permanent beds are available,” said Gord Key, CEO of Huronia District Hospital. “We appreciate the McGuinty government’s investment that will help us use our health care resources more effectively, and it provides another opportunity to demonstrate the commitment of our hospitals to the North Simcoe Hospital Alliance partnership,” added Carol Lambie, CEO of Penetanguishene General Hospital.

A total 36 of the 204 interim long-term care beds will be located at Huronia District Hospital which, along with Penetanguishene General Hospital, is part of the North Simcoe Health Alliance.

In February 2005 the government announced the creation of 500 interim long-term care beds in Ontario. With today’s announcement, that commitment has been met.

“This is a great example of the ministry, long-term care homes and hospitals working together to make sure that people who need these services receive the most appropriate care in the best setting,” said Donna Rubin, CEO, Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors.

“I am very pleased with today’s announcement,” said Karen Sullivan, Executive Director of the Ontario Long-Term Care Association. “Individuals can now get the care they need while they wait for permanent long-term care in their community. This will definitely reduce disruptions for these people and their families.”

The Alternative Levels of Care strategy 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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