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## **MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT INVESTING IN QUALITY NURSING CARE**

### *Funding Initiative To Retain Skilled Nurses In Workforce*

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is ensuring stable, quality patient care by helping hospitals retain the services of experienced nurses, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“The knowledge, skills and compassion that nurses bring to our health care system are absolutely critical,” Smitherman said. “We’re providing funds to ensure that nurses can expand their expertise and stay in the profession, so that hospitals can continue to meet the needs of patients in their communities.”

The \$40 million will be held in a trust fund and will be administered by a management committee representing the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario, the Ontario Nurses’ Association and the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario. The management committee will establish an application process for hospitals interested in receiving funding from this initiative. The funding will be used in the following ways:

- Nurses will be provided with opportunities to expand their knowledge and training so they can work in other clinical areas or nursing roles within the hospital where there are vacancies.
- Funding will be made available for both registered nurses and registered practical nurses.
- Hospitals will be reimbursed for costs incurred for up to six months of orientation, training and education that increases the clinical skills and expertise of nurses.

“The Ontario Nurses’ Association, representing 51,000 front-line registered nurses, is very pleased to see the Ministry supporting the retention of nurses in hospitals across Ontario. This is a concrete step that will assist in providing quality care for our patients during Ontario’s nursing shortage,” said Linda Haslam-Stroud, president of the Ontario Nurses’ Association.

“We congratulate Premier McGuinty and Minister Smitherman for listening to nurses. This funding will contribute to building the stability necessary for nurses to provide the expert care that Ontarians expect and deserve,” said Joan Lesmond, president of the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario.

"This fund will assure that employment and education opportunities for registered practical nurses (RPN) will be maintained in hospitals in order for RPNs to provide quality patient care to the highest standard that Ontarians deserve", said Mona Black, president of the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario.

The funding announced today builds on the \$186 million the government has already invested in its nursing strategy. The strategy aims to stabilize the nursing profession by improving access to full-time employment opportunities and enhance working conditions for nurses in Ontario's hospitals.

This initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan to build a better health care system that delivers on three priorities: providing better access to nurses and doctors, keeping Ontarians healthy and reducing wait times.

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