

For Immediate Release

July 20, 2006

2006/nr-085

PORT HOPE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE CLOSER TO OPERATION

Community Health Centre Will Increase Access to Primary Care

PORT HOPE - Port Hope residents are one step closer to improved access to primary health care with the selection of the Port Hope Community Health Centre (CHC) as the sponsoring organization for the city's new CHC, Health and Long Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“Ontario will benefit from the primary care and community support this CHC will deliver,” said Smitherman. “This organization will play an important role in the success of the CHC and today’s announcement moves us closer to realizing better access to health care services for the people of Port Hope.”

CHCs are non-profit organizations made up of teams that include physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, counsellors, community workers and dietitians. They provide care for those who have difficulty accessing primary health care due to barriers such as language, culture, physical disabilities, homelessness, poverty or geographic isolation. CHCs also care for those with a higher risk of developing health problems than the general population.

“This is a great day for Port Hope and neighbouring municipalities in Northumberland County,” said Aldo D’Agostino, Chair of the Port Hope Community Health Centre Steering Committee. “A community health centre based in Port Hope will enhance the delivery of primary health care services for area residents and will enable us to pool local health and social service resources in designing services that are specific to our needs.”

“The sponsoring organization is a connection to the community. Through this type of grassroots engagement we can ensure that community-based, community- focused health care addresses the specific needs of local residents,” said Northumberland MPP Lou Rinaldi.

This is the latest example of the McGuinty government’s improvements in access to community-based health care. Others include:

- Investing \$117.8 million to improve home care and community support services;
- The creation of 150 Family Health Teams which will improve access to primary care for more than 2.5 million Ontarians in 112 communities;
- Investing \$68.5 million to improve access to community-based mental health services for 22,910 more Ontarians this year.

On November 10, 2005 the McGuinty government announced that Port Hope would be receiving its first CHC as part of the CHC expansion plan for 22 new CHCs and 17 new Satellite CHCs by 2007-08. These 39 CHCs complement the 10 satellite CHCs announced in 2004/05 and bring the total number of new CHCs created by this government to 49. Sponsoring organizations for the remaining 27 new CHCs are expected to be announced in the near future.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities - keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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Media Contacts:

David Spencer
Minister's Office
416-327-4320

John Letherby
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 416-327-4327, or 1-800-268-1154

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