

For Immediate Release
July 21, 2006
2006/nr-086

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT ENSURES HEALTH COVERAGE FOR EVACUEES

Three Month Wait Period Removed for Canadians Returning from Lebanon - Part of Plan to Welcome Evacuees Home

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is ensuring that Canadian Citizens, permanent residents and landed immigrants returning from Lebanon have access to public health care by exempting them from the mandatory three-month waiting period for Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) coverage, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced this morning at the Ottawa Airport, where the first evacuees were scheduled to return..

“There is no measuring the strain and stress these people have endured.” said Smitherman. “That’s why our government is taking this step to ensure they have access to the health care they need when they need it the most.”

Members of the public who have family returning from the Middle East who have questions regarding a relative’s eligibility for OHIP should contact the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s INFOline, at 1-866-255-2292.

The McGuinty government, in partnership with the Ontario Psychological Association (OPA), has also established a provincial phone line that offers emotional support to people returning from Lebanon. The service is being offered by psychologists volunteering their time to respond to phone calls from people who may be experiencing psychological or emotional effects as a result of the situation in that country. People receive short-term crisis support as well as information on any needed follow-up with community mental health providers in their area.

People who are seeking counseling can phone 1-866-255-2292.

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

This news release, along with other media materials, such as matte stories and audio clips, on other subjects, are available on our website at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca> under the News Media section.

For more information on achievements in health care, visit: www.resultsontario.gov.on.ca.

Disponible en français