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MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT COMMENDS FEDERAL HEPATITIS C FUNDING

New Federal Initiative Matches Ontario Response

TORONTO – The Ontario government congratulates the federal government on its new compensation plan for people who contracted hepatitis C through tainted blood prior to 1986 and post 1990, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman said today.

“We’re on the side of hepatitis C sufferers who deserve the very best health care and support,” said Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman. “This is an important commitment by the federal government and we applaud them for it. For hepatitis C sufferers in Ontario this funding will reinforce the support they have already received from our province.”

Since 1998 the Ontario government has provided compassionate financial assistance to people infected with hepatitis C through the blood supply in Ontario. This support is provided through the Ontario Hepatitis C Assistance Plan (OHCAP) which provides eligible recipients with a \$25,000 payment – up from \$10,000 when the program was launched. OHCAP has paid out an estimated \$91 million to over 3,660 people to date.

In 2005, the McGuinty government also created the Hepatitis C Task Force to advise the government on how to improve hepatitis C prevention and treatment.

“Ontario has been a leader in this regard for some time,” said John Plater, Chair of the Hepatitis C Task Force. “It’s great to see the federal government now also come to the table. It’s just the right thing to do.”

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