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## **MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT INVESTING IN BETTER HOSPITAL CARE**

*An Additional \$619 Million This Year; \$1.8 Billion More Over The Next Three Years*

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is ensuring Ontarians have improved access to better hospital care by providing an additional \$1.8 billion to all Ontario hospitals over the next three years, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“We’re on the side of Ontario families, who want and deserve the best health care, including the services they receive in hospital,” Smitherman said. “This funding commitment means patients will benefit from improved access to the world-class hospital facilities we are so fortunate to have in this province.”

Hospitals will receive \$13.35 billion in operating funding this fiscal year, \$13.9 billion in 2007/08, and \$14.5 billion in 2008/09. The funding for this year represents an increase of over \$619 million – 4.9 per cent – from the previous year.

For the second consecutive year, every Ontario hospital will know how much funding it will receive for the next three years.

“Ontario’s hospitals must be made sustainable if they are to be able to meet the growing and changing needs of their patients,” Smitherman said. “That’s why we have stabilized their funding with predictable multi-year allocations that will allow our hospitals to better plan for the needs of their communities and the needs of their patients.”

Over the last two years, the government has been working closely with hospitals to help them balance their books and become more financially stable and efficient. As a result, at the end of March 2006, 140 of the 152 public hospitals had signed accountability agreements with the ministry that commit them to balanced budgets.

“The government’s commitment to multi-year funding is bringing increased and much needed stability to the hospital system,” said Hilary Short, President and CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association. “This allows hospitals to better plan and work to meet patient care needs.”

This is just the latest example of how the McGuinty government’s commitment to providing quality hospital care for Ontario families. Other initiatives include:

- Reducing wait times for five key health care services (hip and knee joint replacement, cataract surgeries, MRI exams, cancer surgeries and cardiac procedures) with a recent investment of \$222.5 million
- Issuing Requests for Proposals for 11 new hospital projects in 2006/07 worth \$2 billion

- Unveiling a \$96 million comprehensive plan to reduce ambulance offload delays and improve critical care at Ontario hospitals
- Unprecedented investments in community-based health care with the creation of 22 new Community Health Centres (CHCs), 17 satellite CHCs and 150 Family Health Teams to reduce the pressure on hospital emergency rooms.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health, 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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