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ONTARIO GOVERNMENT REDUCING HEALTH CARE WAIT TIMES

New Wait Time Data Show Double-Digit Drops in the Waterloo Wellington Area

TORONTO – New data show the Ontario government’s Wait Times Strategy is resulting in decreases in wait times for key health services in the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network area, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“While we still have more work to do, the trends in the Waterloo Wellington LHIN area are encouraging with double-digit drops in wait times for a number of key health services,” Smitherman said. “Clearly, the government’s Wait Times Strategy is having an effect in improving access to services for patients.”

As a result of the government’s Wait Times Strategy, wait times in which 90 per cent of cases are completed in the Waterloo Wellington LHIN area have decreased significantly since August/September 2005 by:

- 70.1 per cent for CT scans (54 days)
- 49.2 per cent for MRI scans (60 days)
- 45.2 per cent for cardiac bypass surgery (66 days)
- 26.8 per cent for hip replacement (112 days)
- 26.5 per cent for cancer surgery (18 days)
- 15 per cent for cataract surgery (41 days)
- 11.4 per cent for knee replacement (51 days)

Wait times for other key health services have also declined by:

- 10.7 per cent for angioplasty (three days)

Cancer surgery, cardiac bypass surgery and CT scans are also below the targets set by the government last December.

At the same time, Smitherman acknowledged one health service area that remains a challenge – there has been a 3.4 per cent increase in wait times in angiography since August/September 2005.

“We continue to make significant investments in cardiac procedures, such as angiography, and we expect to see improvements in wait times for angiography,” Smitherman said.

Since the launch of the Wait Times Strategy, the government has invested \$25.7 million for additional procedures in hospitals in the Waterloo Wellington LHIN area, including:

- 3,170 cataract surgeries (\$2.4 million)
- 1,620 cardiac procedures (\$10.7 million)
- 1,370 hip and knee joint replacements (\$9.7 million)
- 410 cancer surgeries (\$1.8 million)
- 4,920 MRI scans (\$1.3 million).

The new wait time data is available at www.ontariowaittimes.com, which is closing in on the one-million mark with more than 950,000 hits as of today.

“More and more people in the Waterloo Wellington area are seeing for themselves how the government’s Wait Times Strategy is working,” Waterloo Wellington LHIN Chair Kathy Durst said. “We’re confident that the initiatives underway will continue to help people and health care providers in our part of Ontario better manage their wait times and continue this overall general reduction of wait times.”

The Wait Times Strategy is part of the Ontario 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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