

For Immediate Release  
May 18, 2006  
2006/nr-045

## **ONTARIO GOVERNMENT REDUCING HEALTH CARE WAIT TIMES**

*New Wait Time Data Show Double-Digit Drops in the South West 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 South West 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 South West 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 South West LHIN area have decreased significantly since August/September 2005 by:

- 38.8 per cent for angiography (19 days)
- 36.3 per cent for angioplasty (15 days)
- 24.1 per cent for hip replacement (104 days)
- 17.1 per cent for cataract surgery (60 days)
- 13.7 per cent for CT scans (seven days)
- 12.5 per cent for knee replacement (60 days)

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

- 9.3 per cent for cardiac bypass surgery (five days)
- 9.0 per cent for MRI scans (14 days)

Cardiac bypass surgery is also below the access target set by the government last December.

At the same time, Smitherman acknowledged one health service area that remains a challenge – there has been a 5.4 per cent increase in wait times in cancer surgery since August/September 2005.

“We continue to make significant investments in cancer surgery and we expect to see improvements in wait times for cancer surgery,” Smitherman said.

Since the launch of the Wait Time Strategy, the government has invested \$33.6 million for additional

procedures in hospitals in the South West LHIN area, including:

- 4,025 cataract surgeries (\$3 million)
- 1,610 cardiac procedures (\$9.4 million)
- 1,490 hip and knee joint replacements (\$12 million)
- 1,220 cancer surgeries (\$7.7 million)
- 14,200 MRI scans (\$1.6 million).

The new wait time data is available at [www.ontariowaittimes.com](http://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 this area are seeing for themselves how the government’s Wait Times Strategy is working,” South West LHIN Chair Norm Gamble said. “We’re confident that the initiatives underway will continue to help people and health care providers in southwestern 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.

-30-

**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

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](http://www.resultsontario.gov.on.ca).

*Disponible en français.*