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

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

- 36.4 per cent for MRI scans (55 days)
- 10.0 per cent for knee replacement (45 days)

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

- 8.3 per cent for cataract surgery (22 days)
- 5.8 per cent for CT scans (four days)

Cardiac bypass surgery and cancer surgery are below the access targets set by the government last December.

At the same time, Smitherman acknowledged five health service areas that remain a challenge with an increase of:

- 100.0 per cent for angiography (14 days)
- 30.8 per cent for angioplasty (4 days)
- 30.4 per cent for cardiac bypass surgery (14 days)
- 18.1 per cent for hip replacement (50 days)
- 14.0 per for cancer surgery (7 days)

“We continue to make significant investments in cardiac procedures, cancer surgery and hip replacement and we expect to see improvements in wait times for these areas,” Smitherman said.

Since the launch of the Wait Time Strategy, the government has invested \$36.9 million for additional

procedures in hospitals in the Central LHIN area, including:

- 5,080 cataract surgeries (\$3.8 million)
- 1,070 cardiac procedures (\$3.8 million)
- 2,160 hip and knee joint replacements (\$15 million)
- 690 cancer surgeries (\$2.8 million)
- 16,760 MRI scans (\$4.3 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,” Central LHIN Chair Ken Morrison said. “We’re confident that the initiatives underway will continue to help people and health care providers in central 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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