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

### *New Wait Time Data Show Drops In Central West Area*

TORONTO – New data show the Ontario government’s Wait Times Strategy is resulting in decreases in wait times for many key health services in the Central 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 Central 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 Central West LHIN area have decreased significantly since August/September 2005 by:

- 26.8 per cent for CT scans (26 days)
- 11.2 per cent for hip replacement (40 days)

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

- 9.1 per cent for cataract surgery (40 days)
- 8.2 per cent for cancer surgery (seven days)
- 4.5 per cent for knee replacement (15 days)

Cancer 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 10.8 per cent increase in wait times in MRI scans since August/September 2005.

“We continue to make significant investments in MRI scans and we expect to see improvements in wait times for MRI scans,” Smitherman said. “We are also working with area hospitals, such as William Osler Health Centre which has requested that a coaching team be sent in to help the hospital improve the way it provides these key health services.”

Since the launch of the Wait Times Strategy, the government has invested \$9.1 million for additional procedures in the Central West LHIN area, including:

- 7,250 MRI and CT scans (\$1.9 million)
- 2,330 cataract surgeries (\$1.7 million)
- 600 hip and knee replacements (\$4.3 million)

- 250 cancer surgeries (\$1 million)
- 35 cardiac procedures (\$285,300).

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 West LHIN Chair Joe McReynolds said. “We’re confident that the initiatives underway will continue to help people and health care providers in central west Ontario better manage their 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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