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**MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENING LONG-TERM CARE HOME  
LEGISLATION**

*Responding To Presentations Made In Consultations The Past Two Weeks*

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is proposing to further strengthen its long-term care home legislation (Bill 140) following public consultations held the past two weeks, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“We’ve been listening to a number of people and groups concerned about the quality of long-term care homes in Ontario and we are responding with changes to make the legislation even stronger,” Smitherman said. “Our government wants to ensure that residents receive quality care in their homes that is provided with compassion and dignity.”

The government will be proposing amendments in the legislation to:

- Establish staffing and care standards
- Extend the licence terms to allow for more certainty for home operators
- Reduce reporting paperwork associated with the new Act
- Recognize the government’s support of the not-for-profit long-term care homes sector.

“I’ve been impressed by the passion and commitment demonstrated by the people and groups who made presentations before the Standing Committee on Social Policy during the Bill 140 consultations over the last two weeks. I would like to thank them for speaking out on behalf of our long-term care home residents,” said Monique Smith, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. “Their views will make a difference as we work to further improve this legislation to ensure our residents receive the quality of care they deserve.”

The government introduced the proposed *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2006* last October. Highlights of the proposed legislation include:

- Promoting zero tolerance of abuse and neglect of long-term care home residents
- Whistle-blowing protections for staff, residents and volunteers who report abuse or neglect
- Enshrining in legislation that a registered nurse be on duty in the home 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The proposed legislation is just one example of how the McGuinty government is improving the quality of life for long-term care residents. Other initiatives include:

- Funding long-term care homes to hire almost 4,900 new direct care staff, including 1,101 nurses since 2004

- Putting 4,912 new long-term care beds into operation since April 2004
- Announcing plans to add 1,750 new beds and to replace 662 beds in the following communities: south Niagara, south Simcoe, Guelph, London, Windsor, Hastings, Kingston, Ottawa, Sudbury and Thunder Bay
- Enabling spouses to be reunited in the same long-term care home
- Creating a toll-free ACTION line for family and friends to report complaints or abuse in homes.

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