

March 15, 2007

STRENGTHENING ONTARIO'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The McGuinty government has made great progress in its goal to strengthen Ontario's health care system and to increase access to care for all Ontarians:

More doctors and nurses

- The government is bringing better health care to 2.5 million Ontarians by creating 150 Family Health Teams (FHTs). So far, there are more than 1,300 doctors and 426 allied health care professionals working in a FHT.
- Approximately 500,000 people who did not have a doctor now have access to primary care services.
- Medical school enrolment is being increased by 23 per cent.
- The number of family medicine training positions has been increased by 141 positions since 2003 — this 70 per cent increase will lead to 337 more family doctors in 2008.
- The Northern Ontario School of Medicine is now open — the first new medical school in 35 years and the first-ever located in northern Ontario.
- The number of training and assessment positions for international medical graduates has more than doubled - from 90 to 200.
- The government has funded more than 5,400 new nursing positions and is investing \$89 million to guarantee that up to 4,000 new nursing graduates will have the opportunity for a full-time job this year.
- More nurse practitioners are being educated than ever before. Last September, Ontario universities admitted 150 first-year students – double the number in 2004.

Shorter Wait Times

- An investment of more than \$614 million since 2004 in Ontario's Wait Time Strategy has provided nearly 740,000 additional procedures, including:
 - 58,300 more cataract surgeries - leading to a reduction in wait times by 41.2 per cent
 - 22,000 more hip and knee joint replacements - leading to a reduction in wait times by 26.8 per cent for hip replacements and 30.2 per cent for knee replacements
 - 46,900 more select cardiac procedures - leading to a reduction in wait times by 50 per cent for angiography and 39.3 per cent for angioplasty and 2 per cent decrease for bypass surgery
 - 11,600 more cancer surgeries - leading to a reduction in wait times by 16 per cent

- 365,000 more MRI exams - leading to a reduction in wait times by 12.5 per cent
- 234,500 more CT scans - leading to a reduction in wait times by 23.5 per cent.
- Ontarians can now access the wait time at hospitals throughout Ontario for five key procedures by visiting www.ontariowaittimes.com.

Preventing Illness, Promoting Wellness

- The Ministry of Health Promotion was created in 2005 and is dedicated to health promotion and illness prevention, including the prevention of illness and injuries through more active and healthy lifestyles.
- The government has implemented the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which has created 100 per cent smoke-free enclosed public spaces and workplaces in the province. Tobacco consumption in Ontario has also fallen over 18 per cent since 2003.
- Canada's most comprehensive newborn screening program has been established at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. The number of disorders for which newborns are screened has been expanded from 2 to 28.
- Introduced three new vaccines available free of charge for chicken pox, meningococcal meningitis and pneumococcal disease, saving Ontario families up to \$600 per child.
- Increased the provincial share of funding for eligible public health costs to 75 per cent in 2007 from 50 per cent in 2004.

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