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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT'S RECORD ON HELPING NURSES PROVIDE QUALITY CARE FOR ONTARIO RESIDENTS

The McGuinty government recognizes that nurses are the heart of health care. Since 2004, the government has created 5,453 nursing jobs in Ontario and another 2,825 are projected for 2007.

Today's initiative of providing \$57.7 million in annualized funding to create 1,200 new and permanent Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) positions in long-term care homes means the government has delivered on its promise to create 8,000 new nursing positions.

New RPN Initiative

Under this initiative, every long-term care home in the province will be provided funding to create at least one new RPN position.

The initiative will:

- Increase the number of direct nursing care hours for residents;
- Increase the percentage of nurses reporting full-time employment in the sector;
- Address the aging nursing workforce in long-term care homes;
- Improve retention, job satisfaction and reduce burn-out of nurses.

This strategy builds on the Nursing Graduate Guarantee initiative announced earlier this year which provides every 2007 Ontario nursing graduate with an opportunity for full-time employment. RPN graduates will have access to these long-term care home opportunities starting in January 2008, as they complete the Nursing Graduate Guarantee program.

Other Nursing Initiatives

Late Career Nursing Initiative

The government is working to keep late-career nurses in the profession so younger nurses can benefit from their expertise and experience, as well as continuing to provide quality care to patients.

Bedlifts and other workplace safety issues

The government has made improvements to nurse and patient safety through the purchase of patient lifts and needlestick prevention strategies.

Expanded roles for RNs and RPNs

Currently, RPNs must have an order to carry out certain medical procedures. Amendments to regulations under the *Nursing Act, 1991* will permit registered practical nurses to initiate certain controlled act procedures, such as dressing and cleansing wounds, and assisting an individual with the insertion of a catheter. For individual clients of these RPNs the impact may be large, as they will have access to important health care services in a more timely manner.

In May 2006, the government announced the creation of two new roles that provide more opportunities for nurses: nurse endoscopist and surgical first assist. In March of 2007, the government also announced the new advanced practice roles for nurses and other care providers as part of the Anaesthesia Care Teams.

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Media Contacts:

David Spencer
Minister's Office
416-327-4320

David Jensen
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

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