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MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT HALTS BIDDING PROCESS FOR HOME CARE CONTRACTS ACROSS THE PROVINCE

Minister acts out of concern for loss of continuity of patient care

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is halting the competitive bidding process for home care contracts across the province in order to ensure that Ontarians receiving home services continue to receive the highest quality of care.

"I work for patients and I am not going to put their relationships with health care workers at risk," said George Smitherman, Ontario's Minister of Health and Long Term Care.

A January 28 memo from the ministry to board chairs and executive directors of Ontario's Community Care Access Centres asks all centres to cancel bidding processes now underway for nursing, personal support, homemaking and therapy services and to not restart such processes.

"To ensure there is no uncertainty, existing contracts will be extended," said Smitherman. "All processes for other contracts are being halted. In the meantime, we have a fair bit of policy work to do. And my focus is on maintaining the quality of services currently being provided."

Last week, Smitherman stopped the awarding of the home care services contract in Hamilton and surrounding areas, which was the only community where the awarding of a contract was imminent.

The January 28 memo further tells CCACs that the government is reviewing the bidding process and related policies and procedures to "ensure they support the principles of putting the client first, continuity of care and stability for health care workers to ensure Ontarians receive the highest quality home care services possible." It also states that further details will be provided in the near future.

The Ministry memo can be found at: www.health.gov.on.ca

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Media Contacts:

Laurel Ostfield
Minister's Office
416-212-4048

Andrew Morrison
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 1-866-532-3161

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