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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT FULFILS AMBULANCE FUNDING COMMITMENT TO TORONTO

\$11.6 Million Investment To Support Land Ambulance Services And Dispatch Centre

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is providing \$11.6 million to the City of Toronto to support and strengthen land ambulance and dispatch services, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“Ambulance service is crucial – often it’s literally a matter of life and death,” said Smitherman. This investment will enable the City of Toronto to maintain a high standard of ambulance services and patient care for Toronto residents.”

Today’s announcement of \$11.6 million to Toronto for 2007 is an increase of 15 per cent from 2006, and includes one-time funding for the Toronto Central Ambulance Communications Centre. It fulfils the government’s commitment to provide 50 per cent of the cost of Toronto’s land ambulance services.

“We are very pleased with the provincial government’s support for this critical service that the City provides to its residents,” said Toronto City Councillor Joe Mihevc. “This funding will benefit all Torontonians who need quality pre-hospital emergency care.”

"All the staff at Toronto Emergency Medical Services really appreciate the cooperation and support we get from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on a daily basis," said Bruce K. Farr, Chief and General Manager of Toronto EMS. "We are extremely pleased to be receiving this funding, in excess of \$10 million, for both our land ambulance and communications functions."

Other initiatives by the McGuinty government benefiting the health of Ontarians include:

- Committing more than \$142 million in new resources through a three-point Emergency Department Action Plan to address challenges faced by emergency departments in Ontario
- Proceeding with a \$96 million comprehensive plan to reduce ambulance offload delays and improve critical care at Ontario hospitals
- Increasing operating grant funding to hospitals to \$12.9 billion in 2006/07, \$13.4 billion in 2007/08, and \$14 billion in 2008/09.

“We have listened to the concerns of municipalities about land ambulance services and we have responded,” Smitherman said. “We will continue to work with municipalities to promote and enhance improvements in the delivery of ambulance services for the benefit of all Ontario residents.”

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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