

For Immediate Release  
December 6, 2006  
2006/nr-137

## **MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT THANKS CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR SERVICE TO PUBLIC HEALTH**

TORONTO – The McGuinty government today thanked Dr. Sheela Basrur, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health for her outstanding service to the province of Ontario. Dr. Basrur announced earlier today that she will be stepping down from her role due to personal health concerns.

“Dr. Basrur has led the way to rebuilding public health in this province. Under her leadership, we launched Operation Health Protection, the most comprehensive renewal of public health since the 1980s,” said Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman. “Dr. Basrur is a dedicated professional, an excellent communicator and a great leader who is truly passionate about making this province and its people as healthy as possible.”

Dr. Basrur has a long list of accomplishments during her tenure as Chief Medical Officer of Health. She was instrumental in proposing Ontario’s first arms length agency for health protection; she led the development of the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy; she launched a review of all 36 health units across the province with the goal of strengthening health unit capacity; and she laid the groundwork for an extensive examination of the programs and services that are delivered by public health units in Ontario.

“Ontario has one of the most comprehensive tobacco control strategies in North America thanks to Dr. Basrur,” said Minister of Health Promotion Jim Watson. “Thanks to her energy, her dedication and leadership we have made great progress in tackling tobacco use, the number one cause of preventable disease and death in this province.”

Prior to joining the provincial government, Dr. Basrur served as the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Toronto, one of the largest public health bodies in North America. Her leadership and expertise on behalf of the City of Toronto during the SARS crisis is well known. Her role during the outbreak earned her the respect of not only her public health colleagues here in Ontario, but also across North America and around the world.

At the City of Toronto, Dr. Basrur’s many accomplishments included the establishment of DineSafe, a program that gives the public access to restaurant inspection information. This program set the standard for transparency for many other health units across the province.

Dr. George Pasut will be the Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health while a search for a permanent replacement is underway. Dr. Pasut is currently with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as the Executive Lead of Public Health System Transformation. He was the Medical Officer of Health in Simcoe County for nine years, and prior to that, worked for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for seven years.

“Dr. Pasut has solid leadership skills and strong working relationships with the public health

community,” said Minister Smitherman. “Both Minister Watson and I look forward to working with Dr. Pasut, and have full confidence in his ability to protect and promote the health of Ontarians.”

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