

For immediate release
December 18, 2006

McGUINTY GOVERNMENT OPENING DOORS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONALS

Helping Newcomers and Health Professionals Succeed in Ontario

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is breaking down barriers for international professionals to work in their field of expertise by officially opening a one-stop resource and recruitment centre, Ontario Citizenship and Immigration Minister Mike Colle and Ontario Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

Global Experience Ontario is a hub of resources and support for newcomers to navigate through the complex system of licensure and registration in Ontario. The centre also provides a home to the government's HealthForceOntario Strategy to attract and retain health care professionals to work in Ontario to provide greater access to health care for patients.

"We've listened to newcomers who have said that one of the major barriers they face is getting accurate and accessible information about registration practices in regulated professions," Colle said. "Global Experience Ontario is the first centre of its kind in Ontario and a central link to vital newcomer services across the province.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to offer a single point of access for information for health professionals looking for the advantages of working in Ontario and assist internationally trained health professionals to apply their skills in our province," said Smitherman.

Global Experience Ontario, an Access and Resource Centre for the Internationally Trained is part of the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006. The first legislation of its kind in Canada, it will require Ontario's regulated professions to ensure their licensing process is fair, clear and open. Global Experience Ontario provides hands-on support services in-person, by telephone or online, including:

- Links to education and assessment programs; settlement agencies; and, internships and mentoring programs;
- Direction on standards for professional qualifications; licensing and registration processes; referrals for training; and, alternative professions that complement skill-sets.

The facility also houses the HealthForceOntario Recruitment Centre which showcases Ontario as an employer-of-choice for practice-ready health professionals through strategic marketing and advertising to target groups of health professionals, including a campaign to repatriate the estimated 3,000 physicians who are registered to practice in Ontario but who currently reside out of the province.

Other elements of the HealthForceOntario strategy include:

- the creation of the HealthForceOntario Access Centre for Internationally Educated Health Professionals, which provides internationally educated health professionals with access to ongoing counselling and support, and some tools for onsite assessment – the information needed to be successfully licensed to work in health care in Ontario
- a comprehensive job website (<http://www.HealthForceOntario.ca>) that contains a job registry that already has more than 1,000 postings for doctors and nurses across Ontario.

Today's announcement is a further example of how the McGuinty government is breaking down barriers for newcomers and continuing the strong growth of Ontario's economy. Other initiatives include:

- Establishing the first provincial Internship for the Internationally Trained. Administered by Career Bridge, newcomers with a minimum of three years international work experience will be placed for six-month paid assignments within the Ontario Public Service and Crown Agencies.
- Creating a Foreign Trained Professionals Loans program of up to \$5,000 per person to cover assessment, training and exam costs, in partnership with the Maytree Foundation.
- Investing more than \$34 million in more than 60 bridge training projects to help thousands of newcomers work in over 100 trades and professions. These programs create a bridge for newcomers to language training, licensure and work experience.
- Investing \$20.4 million in education and support that brings doctors, nurses and other health professionals working together in teams
- Guaranteeing that every nursing graduate in Ontario is offered a full-time job in the province
- Creating four new health care provider roles in areas of high need.
- Doubling the number of training and assessment positions for internationally educated medical graduates.
- Investing \$130 million annually on programs to help newcomers upgrade their language skills, settle and find work - more than any other province in Canada.

Contacts:

Rick Byun
Minister's Office
Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
(416)325-3460

Michel Payen-Dumont
Communications Branch
Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
(416) 314-7010

David Spencer
Minister's Office
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
(416)327-4320

A.G. Klei
Communications & Information Branch
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
(416)314-6197

Disponible en français

www.citizenship.gov.on.ca
www.OntarioImmigration.ca
www.HealthForceOntario.ca