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MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT IMPROVING ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO

Nurse Practitioner Clinic To Provide Care to 5,000 People

SUDBURY – The McGuinty government is improving access to health services in northeastern Ontario by investing over \$1 million to establish a nurse practitioner primary health care clinic, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“Nurse practitioners play a key role in keeping Ontarians healthy and providing them with quality care,” said Smitherman, who made the announcement at the Nurse Practitioner Association of Ontario annual meeting in Hamilton. “Making more use of nurse practitioners will increase access to health care for people across the province. The addition of this clinic will have a positive impact on the health of thousands of residents in northeastern Ontario.”

The clinic, which will have up to six nurse practitioners, will have three sites – in Sudbury, Chapleau and Dowling. Working in collaboration with family doctors and other health professionals in the area, the nurse practitioners will provide comprehensive care to about 5,000 patients in the region who do not have a family doctor.

“We are delighted that the people of the Sudbury area will have improved access to primary care through the nurse practitioner clinic,” said Marilyn Butcher, co-lead of the clinic.

The clinic will be evaluated in three years to ensure that it has led to improved access, patient satisfaction, integration with family doctors, and better health outcomes.

“We congratulate the Ontario government for continuing to lead the country by utilizing nurses in innovative ways to meet the public’s health care needs,” said Doris Grinspun, executive director of the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario.

“Nurse practitioners are an integral part of Ontario’s health care system,” said Sudbury MPP Rick Bartolucci. “The establishment of this clinic will increase access to vital primary health care services for residents of Northern Ontario.”

“As we continue to build and strengthen our health care system, initiatives such as the one announced today will help further integrate the roles of nurse practitioners as part of the evolution of health care in Ontario,” said Algoma-Manitoulin MPP Mike Brown.

Nurse practitioners are part of the province's new HealthForceOntario health human resources strategy to increase the number of health professionals working in the province to provide quality health care services to Ontarians.

Today's announcement is the latest example of the McGuinty government improving access to health services. Others include:

- Expanding the number of nurse practitioner education seats to 150 this September, one year ahead of schedule
- Creating 150 Family Health Teams which will improve access to primary care for more than 2.5 million Ontarians in 112 communities
- Creating an additional 22 Community Health Centres and 27 satellites.

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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