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## **MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT INVESTING IN COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DOWNTOWN TORONTO**

*Funding Will Increase Access to Primary Care, Boost Youth, and Gay and Lesbian Services*

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is investing more than \$2.5 million to increase access to health care services for diverse populations living in downtown Toronto through the Sherbourne Health Centre (SHC) and other community initiatives, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“Today’s announcement is a major step in improving access to innovative primary health care services in the heart of downtown Toronto,” Smitherman said. “Once the new Sherbourne Health Centre is fully operational, local residents – including new Canadians, Toronto’s LGBT communities and people without permanent housing – will enjoy a tremendous benefit from the unique programs and services it will offer.”

Today’s announcement of \$2,502,150 will support:

- \$2,067,400 in base operating funding for the new SHC. The construction at 333 Sherbourne Street is nearing completion and the facility is expected to be fully operational in January, 2007. The SHC will provide both primary health care and community mental health services to populations with complex needs and/or barriers to service. The funding will allow SHC to hire 16 new staff, begin operation of its new infirmary – including homeless and marginally housed people – and expand the hours of primary health care services to 18 hours a day/seven days a week, resulting in an additional 35,000 primary care service visits a year.
- \$84,750 to support the operation of the Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line, a toll-free, confidential phone line that provides support to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgendered, 2-spirited, queer and questioning youth throughout Ontario.
- \$170,000 in new funding for the Supporting Our Youth (SOY). SOY is a health promotion program that benefits lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) youth in Toronto.
- \$180,000 in new funding to support the (LGBT) Parenting Network which helps LGBT-led families.

“We look forward to being able to offer a mix of programs and services to suit the needs of this diverse community,” said Suzanne Boggild, Chief Executive Officer of the Sherbourne Health Centre. “With increased funding and a new home, Sherbourne will be able to provide enhanced services and better health care.”

As well, the McGuinty Government previously announced that the Sherbourne Health Centre will be the

site of a Family Health Team, as one of 150 Family Health Teams across the province to provide comprehensive primary health care services through a team of doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and other health care providers, depending on the needs of each community.

To date, the government has invested \$62.8 million to establish Family Health Teams. Currently, 66 are operational and serving 1.43 million enrolled patients. When the 150 Family Health Teams are fully operational, they will improve access to primary health care services for 2.5 million Ontarians.

Other initiatives by the McGuinty government that deliver quality community-based services include:

- Creating an additional 22 Community Health Centres and 27 satellites to improve access to the full range of primary care services, including health promotion and disease prevention
- Investing \$117.8 million to improve home care and community support services
- Investing \$68.5 million to improve access to community-based mental health services for 22,910 more Ontarians this year.

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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