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**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST PROVIDE FAIR HEALTH CARE FUNDING TO  
ONTARIO**

*Ontario Receives \$53 Less Cash Per Capita Through the Canada Health Transfer Than Other  
Provinces*

TORONTO – The federal government must provide the same degree of health care funding to Ontario as it does to other parts of Canada, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman said today heading into the two-day federal, provincial and territorial health ministers conference in Moncton.

“Our government wants to ensure Ontarians get the access they deserve and the health services they need,” Smitherman said. “We have accomplished a great deal but we can do even more once the federal government ends its long-standing funding inequity toward Ontario. Federal funding through the Canada Health Transfer must be done fairly, so that all Canadians, including those in Ontario, are treated equally.”

Currently, through the Canada Health Transfer, the federal government provides Ontario with \$53 less cash per capita than it provides to other provinces. This results in a shortfall of \$677 million annually.

Smitherman’s demand came just days after the latest Canadian Institute for Health Information data indicated Ontario’s per capita health spending is seventh in the country.

Smitherman also wants the federal government to reverse its plan to cut wait times funding. Without any change to current plans, the federal funding that provinces are using to help reduce wait times will significantly decrease in 2008/09 – just as service volumes have been dramatically enhanced.

“We want to hear from the federal government that it’s ready to back up its wait times guarantee commitment with funding needed to make lasting improvements to health care access for patients,” Smitherman said.

The 2004 10-year plan is helping provinces and territories meet wait time benchmarks and make other health system improvements, but it does not commit governments to introduce wait times guarantees or provide the funding for it.

Ontario has taken a leadership role in reducing wait times in Canada by:

- Investing \$611 million since November 2004 in Ontario’s Wait Time Strategy which has provided 657,000 additional procedures for the five key priorities (cancer surgery, cardiac procedures, cataract surgery, hip and knee replacements, and MRI/CT scans)

- Decreasing wait times – such as an 87-day decrease for knee replacements, 86-day reduction for cataract surgeries and a 70-day drop for hip replacements
- Creating a public website that provides information on wait times in hospitals across the province.

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