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McGUINTY GOVERNMENT EXPECTING OTTAWA TO FUND ITS FAIR SHARE OF DRUG PLAN COVERAGE

The McGuinty government is moving to improve patient access to drugs through an innovative and comprehensive plan to reform Ontario's drug system. This package of reforms includes asking Ottawa to address inequities in the way the federal government provides drug plan coverage to retired Ontario members of the federal Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP).

PSHCP members include, among others, retired members of the federal public service, the Canadian Forces and the RCMP, as well as retired Members of Parliament and federal judges. An estimated 91,000 Ontarians are currently covered by both the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program and the PSHCP.

Currently the PSHCP expects its members to access other government drug plans – like ODB - before seeking coverage under the federal plan. The change sought by Ontario would see the PSHCP become the “first payer”. Any additional eligible drug expenses would be submitted to the ODB program after it has been submitted to the PSHCP plan. As a result, Ontario becomes the “second payer”.

This proposed change would add up to \$67 million this year for reinvestment in this province's drug programs, for the benefit of patients. The model has already been adopted in Nova Scotia and Quebec.

On April 11, 2006, the Council of the Federation Panel's report on the fiscal imbalance in Canada was made public. The report agrees with Ontario that the federal government has more revenue than it needs and all provinces, including Ontario, need a greater share of that revenue.

For more information on the PSHCP, please visit www.pshcptrust.ca.

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