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MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THE ROLE OF EXTENDED FAMILIES IN ONTARIO

Job-Protected Family Medical Leave Now Includes Relatives And Close Friends

MARKHAM — The McGuinty government is recognizing the changing nature of family in Ontario by extending Family Medical Leave to include relatives and close friends, Labour Minister Steve Peters said today.

“We have expanded Ontario’s Family Medical Leave to allow employees to care for additional family members and people who are like family,” said Peters, speaking to community leaders at the Markham Chinese Cultural Centre. “We’re on the side of employees who need assurance that while they are caring for a gravely ill loved one, their jobs will be protected.”

Family Medical Leave gives employees up to eight weeks of job-protected, unpaid leave to care for a gravely ill family member, when there is a significant risk of death within 26 weeks. A recent change now allows employees to provide care for extended family members as well as friends who may be like family.

Ontario’s Family Medical Leave dovetails with the federal government’s Compassionate Care Benefits Program that permit workers in this situation to apply for Employment Insurance benefits while away from work.

“Family Medical Leave is the result of a compassionate government that understands and cares about all Ontario families,” he added. “It allows people to better balance their work and family responsibilities in the same way as do maternity and parental leaves. We are supporting Ontarians during important and difficult times in their lives.”

For information on exactly how the new eligibility works, visit www.ontario.ca/familymedicalleave or phone toll-free 1-800-531-5551.

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Contacts:

Susan McConnell
Minister’s Office
416-326-7710

Belinda Sutton
Ministry of Labour
416-326-7405

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