

For Immediate Release

May 3, 2006

2006/nr-028

## **MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES NEW HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY**

*HealthForceOntario Strategy Aims To Fill Shortage of Health Care Professionals*

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is improving health care for Ontario families by investing \$45 million this year in an innovative strategy designed to ensure the right supply and mix of health care professionals, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“We are committed to Ontario families, who need and deserve the best health care. That’s why we’re working to meet the need for more health care providers over the next five to 10 years,” Smitherman said. “Through our *HealthForceOntario* Strategy we will create new and innovative health care roles. We will aggressively recruit the best and brightest health care workers to Ontario where we will educate them, train them, and provide them with the best possible working environment.”

The *HealthForceOntario* Strategy has three components:

- 1) Creating four new roles in areas of high need:
  - Physician Assistant
  - Nurse Endoscopist
  - Surgical First Assist
  - Clinical Specialist Radiation Therapist.
- 2) Developing Ontario’s workforce by setting up a one-stop centre for internationally educated health professionals to obtain the information they need to work in Ontario.
- 3) Better equipping Ontario to compete for scarce health care professionals, in the rest of Canada and throughout the world, by establishing a marketing and recruitment centre including a comprehensive job portal.

“Establishing new and expanded roles is a creative way to meet human resource needs in our health care system,” said Chris Bentley, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. “We will be developing new training programs so that current health care providers can expand their knowledge and responsibilities while meeting the growing and changing needs of patients.”

Today’s announcement builds on initiatives already underway in Ontario to improve access to health care professionals, including:

- A 23 per cent increase in medical school enrolment
- The creation of 150 Family Health Teams
- More than doubling the number of training and assessment positions for international medical graduates
- Developing a comprehensive nursing strategy
- Opening a new school of pharmacy in Waterloo

- Reinforcing the new fully inter-professional curriculum at the Michener Institute, funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

“Our government believes that internationally educated health professionals have a lot to offer to our province’s health care system,” said Mike Colle, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. “We look forward to extending new opportunities for these health professionals to provide health care services in Ontario.”

“We want health care professionals to make Ontario their employer-of-choice,” Smitherman said. “Through *HealthForceOntario*, we will be establishing the programs and an environment that make Ontario the obvious choice for a fully realized health career.”

Additional *HealthForceOntario* initiatives are under development in consultation with stakeholders and will be announced in the coming weeks and months.

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.

-30-

**Media Contacts:**

David Spencer  
Minister’s Office  
416-327-4320

John Letherby  
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 416-327-4327, or 1-800-268-1154

This news release, along with other media materials, such as matte stories and audio clips, on other subjects, are available on our website at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca> under the News Media section.

For more information on achievements in health care, visit: [www.resultsontario.gov.on.ca](http://www.resultsontario.gov.on.ca).

*Disponible en français.*