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**MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT IMPROVING ACCESS TO DRUG TREATMENT FOR
PEOPLE WITH FABRY DISEASE**

Joining With Other Provinces, Federal Government And Drug Developers To Fund Three-Year Project

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is improving access to drug treatment for people with Fabry disease through a post-market study funded by Ontario and other provincial governments, the federal government and two drug manufacturers, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“We’re providing funding so we can learn more about Fabry disease and its drug treatment,” Smitherman said. “This project will provide drug therapies to eligible Fabry patients and will help Ontario, and other provinces, make knowledgeable drug funding decisions for the treatment of this rare disease.”

The project will monitor Fabry patients in Canada through a national registry and observe treatment results in more than 100 patients over three years.

Ontario took a leadership role in the complex negotiations process that resulted in a funding agreement for this study.

Patients who qualify will receive one of the two enzyme replacement therapies – Fabrazyme, developed by Genzyme Corporation, or Replagal, developed by Shire Human Genetic Therapies. Both drug developers are participating in the agreement.

Fabry disease is a rare genetic disorder caused by a deficiency of the enzyme alpha-galactosidase A that affects about 250 Canadians. Not all people diagnosed with the disease require drug treatment.

This is just the latest example of how the McGuinty government is on the side of Ontario families concerned about access to needed drug treatments. Other initiatives include:

- Introducing the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act in April 2006. This legislation supports an innovative and comprehensive plan to reform Ontario’s drug system that would ensure improved patient access to drugs and bring about better value for money through changes to drug pricing.
- Establishing an external task force to provide advice to the government on how to improve methadone treatment in the province
- Committing to stockpile enough antivirals to treat 25 per cent of Ontario’s population during the next flu pandemic.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health, 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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