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**MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT REDUCING WAIT TIMES FOR HIP AND KNEE
REPLACEMENTS IN CAMBRIDGE**

287 Additional Surgeries To Be Performed At Cambridge Memorial Hospital

CAMBRIDGE – The McGuinty government is increasing access and improving patient care in Cambridge by investing \$2 million to fund 287 more hip and knee replacement surgeries at Cambridge Memorial Hospital, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“This increase means more people in Cambridge will receive quicker care and regain their independence and mobility sooner,” said Smitherman. “I’m proud that the announcement we’re making today will help so many people overcome the pain and frustration associated with hip and knee disorders.”

“We applaud the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care's commitment to, and investment in, the reduction of wait times across the province,” said Julia Dumanian, President & CEO of Cambridge Memorial Hospital. “Cambridge Memorial Hospital has significantly reduced its wait times and these grants are an instrumental component of our ability to deliver quality health care on a timely basis.”

Today’s announcement is part of an overall \$6.8 million allocation to fund an additional 907 hip and knee replacements at 22 Ontario hospitals by March 2006. When combined with the 6,700 additional hip and knee replacement surgeries already allocated this fiscal year, this represents a nearly 20 per cent increase above last year’s provincial total.

“These allocations are part of a larger plan to shorten wait times across the province through the government's Wait Times Strategy,” said Dr. Alan Hudson, who is leading the plan's implementation. “The strategy includes significantly increasing the number of procedures, investing in new, more efficient technology such as MRI machines, standardizing best practices, and collecting and reporting wait times data to allow better decision making and increase accountability.”

“Wait times are the barometer by which a great many people measure the quality of the health care they are receiving,” said Smitherman. “This increase in hip and knee volumes is an important step toward accomplishing our goal of reducing wait times and improving our health care system.”

The Wait Times Strategy is part of the McGuinty government’s plan to build a health care system that delivers on three priorities - healthier Ontarians, better access to doctors and nurses and shorter wait times.

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