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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT'S TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE BILL PASSES SECOND READING

Legislation Defines Complementary Health Treatment

QUEEN'S PARK – The McGuinty government's proposed legislation to regulate traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and acupuncture has passed second reading, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"We are moving forward with our initiative to protect Ontarians who choose complementary health care like traditional Chinese medicine," Smitherman said. "If passed, this bill will ensure that traditional Chinese medicine is delivered by regulated health practitioners."

Traditional Chinese medicine is currently an unregulated profession in Ontario with no restrictions on who may call themselves a TCM practitioner or who may practise the profession. If passed, the legislation will make TCM the first new health profession to be regulated since 1991.

Highlights of the proposed legislation include:

- Creating a self-governing regulatory college, which would have the authority to set standards of practice and entry to practice requirements for the profession
- Defining the scope of practice and restricted titles that only members of the profession may use, including the use of the "doctor" title by certain members of the profession
- Restricting the performance of acupuncture to members of regulated health professions and to persons who perform acupuncture as part of an addiction treatment program within a health facility.

Traditional Chinese medicine is a holistic system of health care that originated in China several thousand years ago. Therapies include acupuncture, herbal therapy, tuina massage, and therapeutic exercise. TCM views the body as a whole and addresses how illness manifests itself in a patient and assesses the whole patient, not just the specific disease.

Ontario will be the second province in Canada to regulate traditional Chinese medicine after British Columbia.

The proposed legislation is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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