

For Immediate Release

April 27, 2006

2006/nr-026

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT IMPROVING ACCESS TO FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Funding will create 75 New Forensic Hospital Beds

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is improving access to forensic mental health services for people in the criminal court system who are mentally ill and require those services, said Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman today as he announced a \$20 million expansion of hospital and community-based services.

“Our government takes its responsibilities for the care of mentally ill offenders very seriously,” Smitherman said. “The investment we’re making in forensic services will improve access for those individuals who need assessment or treatment, whether in hospital or in the community.”

The funding announced today includes:

- 75 new forensic hospital beds – a 12 per cent increase in the provincial supply – to provide a range of services including mental fitness assessments, court ordered treatment and long-term rehabilitation for people under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Review Board (ORB), the independent board that makes decisions on how best to treat mentally ill offenders.
- 30 additional forensic case managers who will work in hospitals and community agencies throughout the province to support mentally ill offenders who are ready to move from hospital care to the community.

The new beds include the conversion of 12 interim beds at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto. The final allocation of the remaining beds has yet to be determined, but it is expected that they will go to Toronto, Penetanguishene, Ottawa and London.

These initiatives were recommended by the Forensic Mental Health Services Expert Advisory Panel.

“The government is taking positive steps to help ensure that the forensic mental health system capacity can better match the demand for services,” said Judith Tompkins, Chief of Nursing Practice and Professional Services, Executive Vice-President, Program, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. “This investment helps to meet the needs of people with severe mental illness who need care in hospitals as well as for those individuals who are able to move into the community and receive care there.”

Today’s initiative is part of the McGuinty government’s plan to build a health care system that delivers on three priorities - keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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.

Disponible en français.