

For Immediate Release
April 26, 2006
2006/nr-024

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT REVIEWING METHADONE TREATMENT SERVICES *Establishes External Task Force To Provide Advice To Government*

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is establishing an external task force to provide advice to the government on how to improve methadone treatment in Ontario, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“The positive value of methadone treatment for people with opiate addictions and for society as a whole is enormous. Our government wants to make sure those Ontarians who need this service have access to high quality methadone treatment and that this treatment is provided in a safe and effective way,” Smitherman said. “The guidance received from this task force will enable us to move forward with effective strategies for improving methadone treatment.”

The methadone task force will provide advice on:

- Who should receive methadone and how it should be used
- How to better train health care professionals in the use of methadone
- How to involve the community in establishing or relocating methadone clinics
- Quality assurance and assessment
- Payment models

The task force will be chaired by Anton Hart, Publisher, Longwoods Publishing Corporation, one of Canada’s leading publishers of academic, scientific and professional journals. The task force will also have representatives from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, Ontario College of Pharmacists, Ontario College of Nurses, Ontario Medical Association, Ontario Pharmacists Association, Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario, the Coroner’s Office, Health Canada as well as community methadone case management agencies, consumers and Local Health Integration Networks.

“This task force is committed to meeting the community’s health needs and providing exemplary care to those individuals requiring methadone treatment. This is an issue of great importance for those individuals, and for the general public,” said task force chair Anton Hart.

This task force builds on a recommendation from the Coroner’s Office that the government establish an ongoing working group of stakeholders to review the broad issues of methadone maintenance treatment in the province. The task force’s target is to report to the government by the end of the year.

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.

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.