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## **MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT REDUCING WAIT TIMES FOR MRI EXAMS IN NORTH SIMCOE MUSKOKA**

*New MRI At Soldiers' Memorial Hospital in Orillia Means Better Patient Care And Faster Access  
To Treatment*

ORILLIA – Orillia and area residents will have better access to better care, thanks to the approval of a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital in Orillia, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“Our government has taken this step to reduce waiting times for MRIs in this area,” Smitherman said. “Newer technology is a win-win situation for both the patient and the physician: it means a faster diagnosis of an ailment, leading to faster treatment. It also means Ontario’s health care providers are working with state-of-the art tools, making their job that much easier.”

With the addition of an MRI, Soldiers' Memorial Hospital estimates it will be able to provide 2,860 MRI procedures annually to its patients.

In the May 2004 Budget, the government announced the expansion of MRI services in nine hospital sites by 2005-06. Today’s announcement fulfils that commitment by placing the ninth and final MRI at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital.

“This is great news for patients in the Orillia area,” added Smitherman. “For people receiving these scans who get a clean bill of health it will mean quick peace of mind. For others it may mean a fighting chance against a disease like cancer, where early detection is vital.”

“This is absolutely excellent news for the patients we serve as we complete our major redevelopment, including the upgrading and renovation of the entire diagnostic imaging department,” said Bernie D. Schmidt, President and C.E.O. of Soldiers' Memorial Hospital in Orillia. “Our recently added 64-slice CT scanner, coupled with today’s announcement of our first MRI, tops off a complete state-of-the art regional diagnostic centre of excellence for the North Simcoe-Muskoka area.”

“Patients expect and deserve the best possible health care,” said Smitherman. “We are providing Ontarians with faster access to better health services, to reduce their pain and suffering and keep them healthier, longer.”

This 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.

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