

For Immediate Release
September 15, 2006
2006/nr-097

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENING CANCER TREATMENT IN ONTARIO *Funding Will Provide Leading Edge Radiation Treatment Equipment*

LONDON – The McGuinty government is investing \$33.13 million to provide Ontario’s cancer centres with state-of-the-art equipment for radiation treatment, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“We’re on the side of Ontario families who deserve the most advanced medical care available,” said Smitherman. “This funding will ensure that Ontario is able to offer cancer patients access to the latest radiation therapy in their fight against cancer.”

The McGuinty government investment will replace or upgrade equipment for the following cancer centres:

- Juravinski Cancer Centre, Hamilton
- Cancer Centre of Southeastern Ontario, Kingston
- Grand River Regional Cancer Centre, Kitchener
- London Regional Cancer Program, London
- Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre, Ottawa
- Northeastern Ontario Regional Cancer Centre, Sudbury
- Northwestern Ontario Regional Cancer Centre, Thunder Bay
- University Health Network’s Princess Margaret Hospital, Toronto
- Sunnybrook Regional Cancer Centre, Toronto
- Windsor Regional Cancer Centre, Windsor

There are 11 cancer centres across Ontario, which provide cancer patients with quality care and a seamless access to health care services. These cancer centres are the sole providers of radiation therapy for cancer patients in Ontario.

Radiation wait times have steadily improved because of investments in cancer centres, new equipment and better planning. Median radiation wait times have dropped from 6.6 weeks in 2003 to 4.1 weeks in 2006 - a 38 per cent reduction. From spring 2005 to spring 2006, wait times for radiation treatment were reduced by 11 per cent.

“We’re very pleased with this funding for enhancements to our Radiation Treatment Program,” says Cliff Nordal, President and Chief Executive Officer, London Health Sciences Centre. “It represents the commitment of the Ministry and Cancer Care Ontario to ensuring our program can continue to provide excellence in cancer care to our patients.”

“The government’s commitment to modernize radiation equipment is critical to our ability to detect and treat cancer sooner,” said Terrence Sullivan, President & CEO, Cancer Care Ontario. “This investment will directly benefit thousands of cancer patients in communities across the province.”

This is just the latest example of the McGuinty government’s commitment to fighting cancer. Other initiatives include:

- Investing \$152.1 million to fund nineteen cancer fighting drugs, including Velcade and Herceptin
- A \$19.8 million investment to developing new and expanded programs at five cancer centres, to support 13,693 chemotherapy treatments, 41,004 radiation therapy treatments and 53,567 additional assessment and follow-up cancer services
- Improving cancer care for women by investing in new technology and equipment for cervical screening.

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.

-30-

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.