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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENS SIMCOE AMBULANCE SERVICES *Investment Moves Towards 50/50 Cost-Sharing*

ORILLIA – The McGuinty government is providing \$1,166,936 to the County of Simcoe to strengthen land ambulance services that provide critical care to patients in the area, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“Our government is committed to helping municipalities provide quality ambulance services,” said Smitherman. “Ambulance service is crucial – often it’s literally a matter of life and death. This investment will enable the County of Simcoe to maintain the high standards of ambulance services currently being provided to people in this area.”

In February, Premier Dalton McGuinty announced the government would invest \$300 million over the next three years to move towards 50/50 sharing of the cost of municipal land ambulance services by 2008.

“The Premier’s commitment to achieving a true partnership with municipalities delivering ambulance services in Ontario will benefit every property tax payer in the Province,” said Roger Anderson, President of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

“We have listened to the concerns of municipalities about land ambulance services and we have responded,” Smitherman said. “We will continue to work with municipalities to promote and enhance improvements in the delivery of ambulance services for the benefit of all Ontario residents.”

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
Care
416-327-4320

John Letherby
Ministry of Health and Long-Term

416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 416-327-4327, or 1-800-268-1154

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