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**MAITLAND VALLEY FAMILY HEALTH TEAM IMPROVES ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE  
IN GODERICH**

*Community Gets Boost As Family Health Team Adds Nurse Practitioner*

GODERICH – The Maitland Valley Family Health Team is providing better health care to Goderich-area residents by adding a nurse practitioner, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“We’re on the side of Ontario families who want and deserve the best health care available,” said Smitherman. “The addition of this nurse practitioner will mean better access to health care for local residents.”

Maitland Valley Family Health Team physicians currently provide services to approximately 9,000 patients. With today’s announcement, the Family Health Team is made up of nine doctors and two nurse practitioners.

“The addition of a nurse practitioner will allow us to provide more comprehensive care for our patients,” said Dr. Hilary Watson, co-Lead Physician.

“We currently provide inpatient care, emergency department coverage, obstetrical care and anesthesia services – in addition to primary care – to the community,” added Dr. Samuel Appavoo, co-Lead Physician. “The addition of a second nurse practitioner to the Maitland Valley Family Health Team will allow us to offer primary care to more residents in our community.”

The Maitland Valley Family Health Team is one of 150 Family Health Teams announced by the McGuinty government since April 2005. Family Health Teams are designed around the needs of each community. They include doctors who work with other health care providers such as nurse practitioners, registered nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, physician specialists, mental health workers and many others depending on the needs of the local area.

“Family Health Teams are the next evolution in primary health care services and are changing the way health care is being delivered right across the province,” said Huron-Bruce MPP Carol Mitchell. “They mean a stronger health care system now and for generations to come.”

This is just the latest example of McGuinty government initiatives that improve access to health care services. Other initiatives include:

- Creating 104 new first-year medical school spaces by 2009/10
- Investing \$75 million over three years to create an additional 22 Community Health Centres and 17 satellites
- Expanding the number of nurse practitioner education seats to 150 this September, one year ahead of schedule.

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

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