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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT TO OFFER FULL TIME JOB TO EVERY NURSING GRADUATE

Nursing Job Guarantee Beginning In 2007 – As Many As 4,000 New Nurses Will Be Hired

TORONTO – The McGuinty government will guarantee that every nursing graduate in Ontario gets offered a full-time job in the province, 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,” Smitherman said. “Nurses are a vital part of our province’s health care system, a part that must be fully utilized. We want to keep all of our new nursing graduates here in Ontario, providing care to Ontario patients. That’s why we’re offering this job guarantee to every nursing graduate.”

Beginning in 2007, the 4,000 students expected to graduate will be offered a full-time job opportunity in Ontario’s health care field, including in the hospital, long-term care, home care, public health and primary care sectors. This initiative is part of the government’s *HealthForceOntario* human resources strategy launched last week. Details of the upcoming program are being developed by a task force headed by Tom Closson, former president and CEO of the University Health Network, and comprised of employers, professionals and unions.

“If we want to have a sufficient number of nurses to meet the needs of patients, we must continue to implement new approaches to attract and retain new graduates as well as provide a positive work environment for existing staff,” Closson said.

Smitherman also announced that the government will be:

- Investing \$1 million to support tuition costs for nursing students interested in practising in rural, remote or underserved communities
- Authorizing registered practical nurses to initiate certain procedures, such as dressing and cleansing wounds, and assisting an individual with the insertion of a catheter
- Expanding the number of nurse practitioner education seats to 150 this September.

“It is fitting during nursing week, that we not only acknowledge the important work that nurses do, but that we take steps to ensure that we continue to benefit from their expertise and experience. Our government promised to hire 8,000 new nurses, and this job guarantee will take us a long way toward meeting that goal,” Smitherman said.

The McGuinty government has launched several initiatives designed to ensure that Ontario families

continue to receive the best possible nursing care. These include:

- Enhancing the work environments for nurses through better supplies and equipment, and more educational and professional career opportunities
- Keeping late career nurses in the profession while utilizing their skills and experience to benefit the health care system
- Purchasing modern hospital equipment – such as patient lifts, electric beds and safety alarms – to improve patient safety and working conditions for nurses.

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.

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