

For Immediate Release
October 20, 2006
2006/nr-121

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENING DIABETES CARE *New Drugs and Supplies to Improve Quality of Life for Ontarians with Diabetes*

TORONTO — The McGuinty government is improving the health and quality of life for people living with diabetes by increasing access to drugs and insulin pumps, and funding more diabetes support programs, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman announced today.

“The McGuinty government is expanding its program to help more people with diabetes improve their quality of life,” said Smitherman, who was attending the 10th annual conference of the Canadian Diabetes Association and the Canadian Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism. “We’re strengthening a disease management and prevention system that responds to patient and community needs.”

The government is adding a new drug, Actos, to the province’s list of medicines that will be covered by the Ontario Drug Benefit Program under Bill 102’s new conditional listing mechanism.

The government is also providing \$18.1 million to create 25 new community diabetes education programs, and to create new diabetes clinics as part of the government’s chronic disease management strategy. This new funding represents an increase of more than 51 per cent over last year.

As well, Smitherman reaffirmed that the government would cover the costs for insulin pumps and supplies for children who have Type 1 diabetes, benefiting some 1,000 youth in Ontario. Program details will be forthcoming shortly.

“Diabetes is a serious chronic disease that demands disciplined daily self-management,” said Smitherman. “We have an opportunity to help Ontario’s children who live with this disease, and we will fulfill that opportunity very soon.”

Diabetes is a chronic condition resulting from the body’s inability to sufficiently produce and/or properly use insulin, which assists with the conversion of glucose into energy. Without insulin, glucose cannot be sufficiently absorbed from the bloodstream into the cells of the body. Chronic high levels of blood glucose due to diabetes can lead to long-term damage, dysfunction and failure of the kidneys, eyes, nerves, heart and blood vessels.

Today’s initiatives are 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 improving access to doctors and nurses.

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.