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McGUINTY GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP OF LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

LHINs Will Allow Greater Community Involvement In Local Health Care Decisions

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is moving forward with the creation of Local Health Integration Networks - 14 local organizations that will be responsible for planning, integrating and funding local health services to make it easier for patients to access the care they need. The founding board members, CEOs and office locations for each of the LHINs were announced today at events across the province.

“We are creating LHINs because local health services are best planned at the local level, by people familiar with the needs of a community,” Health and Long-Term Care Minister, George Smitherman said. “You can’t micromanage a \$33 billion health care system from an office in Toronto. We need local expertise from right across Ontario to help plan and co-ordinate the health care services that are right for people in different communities.”

Local Health Integration Networks are local health organizations designed to plan, integrate and fund local health services – including hospitals, community care access centres, home care, long-term care, mental health, community health centres as well as addiction and community support services – within a specific geographic area.

Smitherman today announced the names of the 14 LHIN board chairs and 28 founding board directors. The board chairs then announced the CEOs for each LHIN. The government proposes that each LHIN would have a full complement of nine board members by the end of the year.

“Leadership is the key to making any significant system change work,” Smitherman said. “The founding board members for our LHINs have impressive records of service in their communities. They bring diverse leadership experience in the private and public sectors to the task of improving the way we manage our health care system.”

The roles of LHINs will be phased in over time. Subject to the passage of legislation, they would begin by working with the local community and health care providers to set priorities and plan health services in their area. They would then move to integrating and co-ordinating local health services, and eventually, to determining and providing funding and resources.

“LHINs will make it easier for patients to access all of the different health services they need, in their own communities, because these services will be co-ordinated in those communities,” said Smitherman.

This 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.

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