

Attention News/Health Editors:

New Health Quality Council To Monitor Health Care

New Body To Report On Health Care System Performance

TORONTO, Sept. 12 /CNW/ - The McGuinty Government is launching the Ontario Health Quality Council, an independent body formed to monitor the health care system and report to the public on how well it is performing, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"The Ontario Health Quality Council is going to tell the health care story to Ontarians in a way that has never been done before," Smitherman said. "Through the council, Ontarians will be engaged in the health care discussion, and be able to hold our government accountable for the progress we're making in health care, beginning with reducing wait times."

This new monitoring council will deliver an annual report on how the health system is performing, with the first report expected by Spring 2006. Included in these reports will be the progress the government is making on health priorities like wait times, the creation of Family Health Teams, and promotion of health and wellness.

Ray Hession, retiring chair of the board of governors at The Ottawa Hospital, will be the chair of the council with Victoria Grant, a former co-ordinator with the Noojimawin Health Authority in Toronto, serving as vice-chair.

"This new council, on which I am proud to serve, is a clear demonstration of our province's commitment to medicare," Hession said. "Our first priority will be to organize the council's business and establish a work plan, and we will begin work on our first report to Ontarians on the state of the health care system."

"I look forward to working with this outstanding group to keep Ontarians informed about the state of the province's health care system," said Lyn McLeod, current provincial representative on the Health Council of Canada, who was named as a cross appointment. "The work of this council will complement what's happening at the national level with the Health Council of Canada."

"We're very fortunate to have a tremendous group of individuals with a great deal of health care experience and knowledge serving on this new council," Smitherman said. "By engaging Ontarians in a dialogue about their health care system, they are going to help us improve that system and help Ontarians keep track of those improvements."

"I have been clear that new money must buy real change, that stronger accountability to the people regarding progress is essential", said Roy Romanow, former Royal Commissioner on health care. "This new council is a very promising addition to Ontario's bold health care reforms."

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.

Version française disponible

Backgrounder

ONTARIO HEALTH QUALITY COUNCIL

The establishment of the Ontario Health Quality Council is part of the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, 2004, which received Royal Assent on

June 17, 2004.

As set out in the act, the council will monitor and report to Ontarians on access to publicly funded health services and related health human resources, consumer population health status, and health system outcomes. In this way, it will support continuous quality improvement.

The council's annual reporting is designed to:

- encourage and promote an integrated, consumer-centred health system
- track performance of the Ontario health system
- help Ontarians to better understand and benefit from their health system by making it more transparent and accountable.

The council will report annually to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, who will in turn, share the council's reports with the Ontario legislature and the public.

Last March, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced that the government was looking for people to become members of the council.

Those eligible to be members included:

- Experts in the health system in the areas of patient and consumer issues and health service provision; and/or
- Experts in the areas of governance, accountability and public finance; and/or
- Persons from the community with a demonstrated interest or experience in health services.

One Ontario member of the Health Council of Canada, Lyn McLeod, has also been cross-appointed to the Ontario Health Quality Council.

Members of boards, CEOs, and officers of other health system organizations aren't allowed to serve on the council. Council members will receive per diem compensation for attending council meetings and related work, as well as travel and accommodation expenses as required. They will be expected to serve for two or three years, depending on the term of appointment.

Backgrounder

ONTARIO HEALTH QUALITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ray Hession, Chair

Ray Hession of Ottawa is the immediate past chair of the board of governors of The Ottawa Hospital and former president and chief executive officer of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. He is currently chair of the Cooperative Housing Agency of Canada and lead independent director of Adherex Technologies Inc. Previously, Mr. Hession had been employed in various positions including: former deputy minister in the federal government; former industry manager (government, education and medical), with IBM Canada Ltd.; leader of the 2004 review of the Information Technology Human Services Cluster of Ontario; former chair of the Rehabilitation Center of Ottawa and former trustee of the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group.

Victoria Grant, Vice-Chair

Victoria Grant of Stouffville is currently self-employed at Nii Wi Wog

Ina Mon, Facilitation and Mediation. Previously, Ms. Grant was employed as a consultant for Temagami First Nation; a co-ordinator with the Noojimawin Health Authority; career edge co-ordinator with ScotiaBank; and office manager and financial administrator at the law firm of Smith, Byck & Grant. Ms. Grant is currently involved in a number of community projects that include: an advisory committee for Trans Canada Pipelines; an advisory committee of the Using GIS Technology for Injury Prevention and Control Research Group; an advisory committee of the Indigenous Health Research Development Program at McMaster University and the University of Toronto; aboriginal sub-committee chair and member of the Organizing Committee for the Health Promotion Summer School, Nishnawbe Homes; a member of the Temagami First Nation Rama Funding Committee, and chair of Temagami Community Foundation.

Dr. Raymond Lafleur, Council Member

Dr. Raymond Lafleur of Hearst recently retired as president and chief executive officer at Notre-Dame Hospital in Hearst. Previously, Dr. Lafleur served as an administrator, assistant executive director and personnel director at the hospital. Throughout his career, Dr. Lafleur served on numerous boards as well as on many Ontario Hospital Association committees and was actively involved in community affairs. He was a mentor to many health care students throughout Canada both at the Canadian School of Management and the Canadian Hospital Association. He was also a founding member of the Hearst Rotary Club in 1988.

Dr. Janice Owen, Council Member

Dr. Janice Owen of Ilderton is currently employed as co-facilitator of the research program for community physicians and staff physician at the Children's Hospital of Western Ontario, and a physician/partner at Women's Health of London. Previously, Dr. Owen had been employed as a physician at the Middlesex London Health Unit and practised family medicine in London. Dr. Owen's current community involvement includes involvement in the ad hoc committee for Reaching Unattached Women, and the Thames Valley Family Practice Research Liaison Committee.

Laura Talbot-Allan, Council Member

Laura Talbot-Allan of Kitchener is currently employed as vice-president of external relations at the University of Waterloo. She is also president and senior partner of Talbot-Allan Consulting. Previously, Ms. Talbot-Allan was senior vice-president and chief financial officer at Bank One International (Canada). She was also employed with the federal government in a variety of senior positions. Ms. Talbot-Allan is currently involved in several projects that include: the Deposit Insurance Corporation of Ontario and the Council for Advancement & Support of Education.

Shaun Devine, Council Member

Shaun Devine of Waterloo is currently employed as assistant vice-president and senior counsel at Sun Life Assurance Company, Canada. Previously, Mr. Devine has acted as co-counsel to the Canadian Red Cross Society in the Commission of Inquiry into the Blood System in Canada. Mr. Devine's community memberships include: Tri-Hospital Research Ethics Board for Grand River Hospital, and the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce Physician Recruitment Task Force.

Dr. Arlene Bierman, Council Member

Dr. Arlene Bierman of Toronto currently holds a number of positions -

chair in women's health with the Ontario Women's Health Council, University of Toronto; senior scientist at the Centre for Research on Inner City Health at St. Michael's Hospital; associate professor of medicine with nursing and health policy evaluation and management; adjunct scientist at the Institute of Clinical Evaluative Sciences; deputy editor of the Journal of General Internal Medicine; and consultant, Health Sciences Advisory Group. Dr. Bierman sits on a number of committees and boards including: the technical expert panel with the Medicare Health Outcomes Survey, and the Geriatric Measures Advisory Panel.

Zulfikarali Kassamali, Council Member

Zulfikarali Kassamali of Toronto is the president and consultant of Zul's Consultancy Services, a multi-cultural agency that provides personalized cross-cultural consultation, support, training and conflict resolution programs, projects and performance evaluation. Mr. Kassamali is presently a member of the Toronto Mayor's Roundtable on Senior Issues. He is also a senior advisor for His Holiness The Aga Khan Health Board for Canada; president of Multicultural Alliance for Senior's and Aging; board member of the Ontario Gerontology Association, and a member of the Chief's Advisory Council of the Toronto Police.

Paul Genest, Council Member

Paul Genest of Ottawa is currently employed as assistant vice-president of health care with Bell Canada. Previously, he was a senior policy advisor to Allan Rock, Minister of Health; director of policy and research with the Office of the Prime Minister and director general, intergovernmental affairs, Health Canada. He currently is a member of the policy advisory committee for Imagine Canada.

Abbyann Day Lynch, Council Member

Abbyann Day Lynch of Toronto is currently self-employed as the founding and continuing director of Ethics in Health Care Associates (private consulting group). Previously, Ms. Day Lynch held numerous positions including: president and chair of Associated Medical Services Inc.; director of the bioethics departments at the Hospital for Sick Children; and associate professor at the University of Toronto.

Lyn McLeod, Provincial Representative

Lyn McLeod of Newmarket served in elected political office, locally and provincially, for 33 years. First elected to the Ontario Legislature in 1987, McLeod has served as Minister of Colleges and Universities, Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Energy as well as serving on the policy and priorities board of Cabinet. McLeod served for 17 years as a school trustee in Thunder Bay, including seven years as chair. She was the 1998 recipient of the Bernadine Yackman Memorial Award, presented by the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. McLeod has also been honoured by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, which presented her with the prestigious Lamp of Learning Award. She is presently the Ontario government representative on the Health Council of Canada.

For further information: Members of the media: Karman Wong, Minister's Office, (416) 326-3984; Dan Strasbourg, 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
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