

The Queen's Park Guide

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Who Made the Following Statements?

- 1) We need an energy bill that encourages consumption.
- 2) You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it.
- 3) Politics gives guys so much power that they tend to behave badly around women. And I hope I never get into that.
- 4) The Hon. Member disagrees. I can hear him shaking his head.

Answers are on the last page of the Guide.

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Ontario Government Announces a Rise in the Number of International Medical Graduates



Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, George Smitherman

On February 2, 2006, Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced that the number of medical licences issued in 2005 was the highest in 20 years, with the greatest portion of the new licences being given to international medical graduates (IMG).

IMGs received 39 percent of the licences issued - more than Ontario graduates and more than double the number of IMGs in comparison to 10 years ago.

The Ontario government is investing about \$40 million in 2005/06 for IMG training, assessment and support - more than a 50 per cent increase in funding from the previous year. This funding supports more than 300 IMGs in various levels of training and assessment positions.

As of December 2005, IMG programs have resulted in more than 95 IMGs currently providing service in Ontario's underserved communities.

Specifically, the number of medical licences has nearly doubled in the last 10 years, reaching 2,747 in 2005.

New Funding to Strengthen Services for Victims of Domestic Violence



Ontario Minister of Community and Social Services, Sandra Papatello

On February 7, 2006, Ontario Minister of Community and Social Services, Sandra Papatello announced the government is investing \$2 million in new funding to cover operational costs at women's shelters and boost counselling services delivered by second stage housing providers.

The new money will also be used for one-time repair and maintenance expenses at women's shelters and second stage housing providers to help keep these facilities in good repair for the women and children who depend on them in a time of crisis.

The new funding builds on the government's comprehensive Domestic Violence Action Plan, bringing its total commitments to \$68 million. The plan includes better community supports to protect victims; a focus on public education, early intervention and prevention; a stronger justice system response and offers better access to support services for francophone, aboriginal and diverse populations.

Ontario Government Announces Action Plan to Increase Ambulance Effectiveness and Reduce Wait Times



Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, George Smitherman

On January 30, 2006, the Ontario government announced a \$96 million action plan designed to reduce emergency room wait times.

In 2005, the Hospital Emergency Department and Ambulance Effectiveness Working Group, headed by Dr. Brian Schwartz of Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre's

Base Hospital, was established to offer advice on enhanced access and quality of service within the emergency department. The report recommends ways for hospitals and ambulances to transfer patients more efficiently from ambulance paramedics to the hospital emergency department. In response to the report the government will:

- Appoint Ken Deane, President and CEO of St. Joseph's Health Centre Toronto as chair of the Emergency Department and Ambulance Quality Implementation Team, which will help the government implement the report's recommendations.

- Invest \$5.18 million in demonstration projects at North York General Hospital and Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre to transport select patients to the Branson Urgent Care Centre and Women's College Urgent Care Centre respectively, instead of the hospitals' emergency departments.

- Provide \$698,000 to St. Michael's Hospital to implement a surge capacity protocol on how to move patients from the ambulance and into hospital treatment faster, meaning fewer delays for both the patient and the medical professional attending to that patient.

The Critical Care Strategy will be implemented over the next three years in hospitals across the province. It consists of initiatives in four categories:

- \$29.4 million to create Critical Care Response Teams (CCRTs).
- \$38.3 million for Increased Intensive Care Unit (ICU) bed capacity.
- \$10 million directed to Health Human Resources.
- An additional \$12.2 million will support related initiatives.

Ontario Government Establishes Advisory Committee on Postsecondary Programs



Ontario Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Chris Bentley

On January 26, 2006, the McGuinty government established an advisory committee on improving access to French-language postsecondary programs.

The advisory committee is part of the government's plan to help postsecondary institutions deliver programs that improve access to postsecondary opportunities for francophones, aboriginals, persons with disabilities and those who would be the first in their families to attend college or university.

Part of this funding will be used to help French-language colleges and bilingual universities foster a more vibrant francophone postsecondary education community in the province.

The funding is part of Reaching Higher: The McGuinty Government Plan for Postsecondary Education, which was unveiled in the 2005 Budget.

"I am pleased this outstanding group of individuals has agreed to offer their extensive experience and expertise as we try to help francophone students not only access French-language postsecondary programs, but also succeed in their studies," said Chris Bentley, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

New Funding to Retain Skilled Nurses in Ontario's Workforce



Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, George Smitherman

On January 26, 2005, the Ontario government announced they are taking steps to help hospitals retain the services of skilled nurses.

Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, George Smitherman stated that \$40 million will be held in a trust fund and will be administered by a management committee representing the Registered Nurses' Association

of Ontario, the Ontario Nurses' Association and the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario.

The management committee will establish an application process for hospitals interested in receiving funding from this initiative. The funding will be used in the following ways:

- Nurses will be provided with opportunities to expand their knowledge and training so they can work in other clinical areas or nursing roles within the hospital where there are vacancies.

- Funding will be made available for both registered nurses and registered practical nurses.
- Hospitals will be reimbursed for costs incurred for up to six months of orientation, training and education that increases the clinical skills and expertise of nurses.

The management committee will use the following principles to guide their decision-making:

- Both registered practical nurses and registered nurses will benefit from this fund.
- Nurses will be provided with opportunities to expand their knowledge and training so they can work in other clinical areas or nursing roles within the hospital where there are vacancies.
- Salaries and benefits for nurses for up to six months for re-training to fill an upcoming position.
- Orientation time provided by hospitals for those nurses moving to a different location/place of work to assume vacant positions.
- Education and/or training provided for nurses to bridge to upcoming positions that require additional skills and training.
- Hospitals will need to be accountable and show that the funding was used as intended.

McGuinty Government Announces Consultation on the Future of Ontario's Electricity



Ontario Minister of Energy, Donna Cansfield

On February 2, 2005, Ontario Minister of Energy, Donna Cansfield, announced government consultations on the future of Ontario's electricity.

The consultation plan consists of four components:

- Building new generation capacity

- Maximizing our existing transmission and generation sets
- Creating a culture of conservation
- Putting the infrastructure in place to ensure sound planning for Ontario's long-term energy needs.

In 2005, the Minister of Energy directed the Ontario Power Authority to prepare a report providing advice to the government on Ontario's future electricity supply mix. The public consultations will address recommendations made by the Ontario Power Authority in their report delivered to the government in December 2005.

Ontarians will have several opportunities to share their views on the Ontario Power Authority's Supply Mix Report and to receive information, including:

- Public consultation meetings in 12 communities across Ontario
- Visiting the ministry's website
- Posting Advice on the Environmental Bill of Rights.

Upcoming Events

Monday February 13, 2006 - The Hon. Dwight Duncan is having a reception from 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m at the Ontario Club in Toronto.

February 17, 18 and 19, 2006 - The PC Party of Ontario is having their Policy Conference at the Sheraton in Niagara Falls.

Wednesday February 15, 2006 - The Hon. Jim Bradley is having a cocktail reception from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Sutton Place Hotel. The special guest will be the Hon. Dwight Duncan. Tickets are \$300 each.

Thursday, February 16, 2006 - The Hon. Leona Dombrowski is having a reception from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Ontario Club in Toronto. The special guest will be the Hon. George Smitherman. Tickets are \$300 each.

February 24-26, 2006 - Ontario Liberal Policy Conference on Immigration and Diversity Policy will take place at the Delta Meadowvale in Mississauga. Speakers at the convention include Ministers Mike Colle and George Smitherman. Please note this is a delegated policy convention.

Thursday, March 2, 2006 - The Ontario Liberal Heritage Dinner 2006 will take place at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Tickets are \$8,000 per table.

Wednesday, March 29, 2006 - Ontario PC Leader, John Tory is having his Hamilton reception at the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce. Tickets are \$250 per person.

Thursday, May 4, 2006 - Ontario PC Leader, John Tory is having his Toronto Dinner at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

For more information or to acquire tickets please contact the Pathway Group.

Who Made the Following Statements? 1) Margaret Thatcher; 2) Abraham Lincoln 3) George W. Bush 3) Pierre Trudeau
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