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## **MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT IMPROVES ACCESS TO MIDWIFERY SERVICES** *Increased Funding Means 50 More Midwives Can Begin Practising in Ontario*

**TORONTO** – The McGuinty government is improving access to maternity services for women by investing \$13.8 million to support the growth of midwifery in Ontario, including increasing the number of midwives by 50, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“There is a growing need for midwifery services in this province, and we are responding to that need,” Smitherman said. “This significant investment will mean better care for 1,600 women and their babies.”

The government is providing \$51 million for midwifery services in 2005-06 – an increase of 38 per cent from last year. There will now be up to 356 registered midwives providing services to more than 11,000 Ontario women each year in community clinics, community-based agencies, at home and in hospitals. The new funding will also cover the cost of an increase in midwifery fees and operating expenses, resulting from a new agreement last December between the government and the Association of Ontario Midwives.

“We welcome the government’s support for midwifery, and to ensuring that Ontario’s women get the maternity care they want,” said Elana Johnson, President of the Association of Ontario Midwives. “More midwives means better care for women and their babies.”

“We are continuing to expand community-based health care in Ontario, particularly with the creation of our Family Health Teams,” said Smitherman. “With their focus on prevention and health promotion and their collaborative model of care, midwives are providing important support for the government’s vision for health care.”

This initiative is part of the McGuinty government’s commitment to build a health care system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and improving access to doctors and nurses.

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