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**ONTARIO SECOND PROVINCE TO MAKE NEW DRUG AVAILABLE TO FIGHT LARGEST CAUSE OF BLINDNESS*****Lucentis will be added to provincial drug formulary this month*****NEWS**March 13, 2008  
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Ontarians suffering from the leading cause of blindness in Canada will now have access to the new prescription medicine Lucentis.

Neovascular (wet) age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a degenerative condition affecting central vision in people typically aged fifty and older. Lucentis works to maintain and even improve vision affected by wet AMD.

Today's investment of over \$100 million over three years means that Ontarians suffering from AMD will for the first time have access to this groundbreaking drug.

**QUOTES**

"Many people in Ontario, especially older people, will enjoy improved eyesight and quality of life with the availability of Lucentis through our publicly funded drug programs," said George Smitherman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

"We are extremely pleased that Lucentis, a product proven to prevent blindness, is being covered by Ontario's public drug programs," said Jim Sanders, CEO and president of CNIB. "I know that people with wet AMD, including many seniors, will be very happy with this announcement. It is clear that Ontario is establishing itself as a leader in meeting the needs of patients in need of important drug therapies."

"The decision to cover Lucentis is fantastic news for the people of Ontario that suffer from macular degeneration," said Dr. Kyle Brydon, Chair of the Ontario Medical Association's Section on Ophthalmology. "Lucentis is one of the most effective treatments for people suffering from the wet form of macular degeneration...The government's decision to cover Lucentis will allow many more patients to be treated and potentially avoid the devastating impact of sudden, irreversible blindness."

**QUICK FACTS**

- Approximately 10,000 patients are treated for AMD in Ontario each year.
- AMD affects the macula, an area of the retina responsible for detailed visual activities such as reading and facial recognition.

- Since October 2003 the McGuinty government has added 86 new brand-name drugs available in 154 different strengths and formats – including Lucentis – to the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary for reimbursement through the Ontario Public Drugs Programs. In addition, 15 drugs are reimbursed through the Exceptional Access Program.

## **LEARN MORE**

For more information on Lucentis, visit [the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care](#) .

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Laurel Ostfield, Minister's Office, 416-212-4048  
David Jensen, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
416-314-6197

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