

## Provincial Budget maintains Hospital Growth Funding during very tough economic times

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**Toronto:** Today's provincial budget provides an additional \$10 million in annual hospital growth funding. Coupled with the \$30M provided last year, hospitals in high growth communities have now received \$40M of a \$100M election commitment to provide annual growth funding to hospitals in Ontario's fastest growing communities.

"We are pleased that during these very challenging economic times the province will continue to invest to address population growth pressures facing hospitals in Ontario's fastest growing communities," said Anne McGuire, Chair of the *Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance*.

"We were hoping that the additional federal health care funding would have allowed the province to move more quickly on the hospital growth funding commitment, but we appreciate that there are many competing demands for provincial funding during this difficult economic period," noted McGuire.

"Population growth means that many more patients need to be cared for by hospitals in high growth communities. While this additional growth funding is helpful, we need to continue to work with our partners, Local Health Integration Networks and with the province to expedite the growth funding commitment and ensure adequate hospital growth funding continues to flow so that Ontarians in high growth communities can get timely access to hospital care close to home," added McGuire.

Last December, a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) showed that hospital services in high growth communities in the GTA/905 regions, Kitchener and the Waterloo Region, Simcoe County, Wellington County and Dufferin County receive \$255 less per resident in provincial funding compared to the rest of Ontario and that community-based & long-term care services received \$84 less per resident in provincial funding. For residents in these regions, this translates into a \$1.4 billion annual operating funding gap for local hospital care and a \$526 million annual operating funding gap for local community-based & long-term care services.

The Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance works on behalf of Ontarians in high growth communities to improve their local access to hospital and health care services. High growth communities account for more than 70 per cent of Ontario's annual population growth, growing by more than 100,000 new residents each year.

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