

Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance is Growing Again

Like the communities we represent, membership in the Alliance continues to grow

September 9, 2008

Toronto (ON): The *Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance* (formerly the GTA/905 Healthcare Alliance) has long been an advocate for equitable hospital funding for Ontario's high growth communities. Fair funding for Ontario's hospitals will help ensure that the four million Ontarians living in Ontario's fastest growing communities have timely access to high quality care at their local hospitals, close to home.

After welcoming six new hospitals as Alliance members in March 2008 and changing its name to the *Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance*, the Alliance is pleased to welcome three additional members from the fast growing communities of Barrie, Guelph and Kitchener.

The three new Alliance members are: Royal Victoria Hospital (Barrie)
St. Joseph's Health Centre (Guelph)
Grand River Hospital (Kitchener)

"We are very pleased to have even more hospitals join our Alliance so we can better encourage and work with the Ontario government to continue to improve local access to hospital care in high growth communities," said Ann Stapleford McGuire, Chair of the Alliance. "Having more voices in our Alliance strengthens not only our message but also our resolve as we advocate for better health care close to home for Ontarians living in high growth communities."

Through Alliance efforts, the Ontario government committed to providing \$100M in additional funding for Ontario's high growth communities. \$30 million for hospital growth funding was provided this year. However, residents in Ontario's high growth communities still receive \$258 less per resident for hospital services translating into a \$1.5 billion annual operating funding gap.

"The Province has started to address the expanding hospital and health care needs of fast growing communities like Kitchener-Waterloo through hospital growth funding," said Malcolm Maxwell, president and CEO of Grand River Hospital. "We want to do a better job of outlining the needs of our high growth communities and the benefits of allocating new hospital funding through a population-needs-based funding formula. Working with the Alliance and other hospitals will help us do that."

"Royal Victoria Hospital finds it increasingly difficult to meet the health care needs of residents, in a community that is growing at a rate five times the provincial average," says Steve Blanchet, Chair, RVH Board of Directors. "By joining the Alliance and working with other high growth hospitals on behalf of our patients, we will continue to encourage the provincial government to provide appropriate growth funding based on a population-needs formula."

"As the health care needs of our growing population change it is critical that we are resourced to meet the increasing demands for these services," said Marianne Walker, CEO of St. Joseph's Health Centre Guelph. "Having the Provincial government continue to provide adequate and

on-going hospital growth funding, and equally important, distributing new hospital funding using a population needs-based formula, is essential to building hospital service capacity to meet the growing local health care needs.”

Working in collaboration with the Ontario government, Mayors, Regional Chairs and MPPs, the Alliance is bringing forward practical solutions to fix the funding inequities across Ontario’s health care system. These solutions include having the Ontario government provide adequate and on-going growth funding for hospitals in high growth communities and for the Ontario government to distribute new provincial health care funding using a population-needs-based funding formula.

- 30 -

For information contact:

Tariq Asmi, Executive Director

Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance

Cell: (416) 948-2033 Office: (416) 205-1331

tasmi@gcha.ca www.growingcommunities.ca

BACKGROUNDER

The **Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance** works on behalf of 4 million Ontarians to improve their local access to hospital and health care services in their high growth communities. These communities account for more than 70 per cent of Ontario's annual population growth, growing by more than 100,000 new residents each year.

Key to ensuring that Ontarians in high growth communities have equitable local access to high quality hospital and health care services is ensuring that all communities receive their fair share of provincial health care funding.

Right now, hospitals providing care to residents in high growth communities receive on average \$258 less per resident when compared to residents in all other communities. This per resident funding gap translates into a \$1.5 billion annual operating funding gap for local hospital care.

- For Kitchener, Guelph and surrounding communities, the per resident funding gap stands at \$273 and the annual operating funding gap for local hospital services is \$201 million.
- For Barrie and surrounding communities, the per resident funding gap stands at \$284 and the annual operating funding gap for local hospital services is \$136 million.

These funding gaps have widened over the last five years and will continue to widen over the next several years unless additional steps are taken by the Ontario government to fix the funding gap. Underfunding of hospital services in high growth communities means 4 million Ontarians will wait longer for care, face more congested emergency rooms, and often by-pass their local hospital to get care or treatment.

Working with the Ontario government, the Alliance is seeking fair funding within Ontario for local health care services. To this end, the Alliance is asking the Ontario government to:

1. **Provide adequate on on-going hospital growth funding that is targeted to hospitals in high growth communities to reduce funding gaps.** Thus far the province has committed to providing \$100million in growth funding to hospitals in Ontario's fastest growing communities over the next four years. This is a first step towards improving local access to hospital care. Growth funding will help to reduce wait times and decongest local emergency departments, ensuring services can grow as the communities grow and will help to improve patient safety.
2. **Implement the "Health Based Allocation Model" (HBAM):** This new funding formula has been in development since 2006. It is a step in the right direction to bring Ontario to a "Population-Needs-Based-Funding formula". Most provinces and many regionalized health care systems use a population-needs-based-funding formula to equitably distribute new health care funding. Last fall the Ontario government said it would implement HBAM to distribute new health care funding. While HBAM has been used to equitably distribute some health services funding, most new funding for hospitals continues to be allocated based on historical funding. This serves only to widen the hospital and health funding gap in high growth communities.
3. **Develop and implement a Health Care Growth Plan for Ontario's High Growth Communities:** *Places to Grow* is a good plan for building the physical infrastructure in Ontario's high growth communities. But to truly build the "complete communities" envisioned in *Places to Grow*, the Ontario government needs to complement the infrastructure growth plan with a health care growth plan. A Health Care Growth Plan for Ontario's High Growth Communities will help ensure that local hospital and health care services capacities keep pace with the rapidly growing populations in these communities.

Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance Member Hospitals

Cambridge Memorial Hospital - Cambridge	North Wellington Health Centre - Mount Forest
Credit Valley Hospital - Mississauga	Queensway Carleton Hospital - Ottawa
Grand River Hospital - Kitchener	Rouge Valley Health Centre - Scarborough/Ajax
Groves Memorial Community Hospital - Fergus	Royal Victoria Hospital - Barrie
Guelph General Hospital - Guelph	Southlake Regional Health Centre - Newmarket
Halton Healthcare Services Corp. - Oakville	St. Joseph's Health Centre - Guelph
Headwaters Healthcare Centre - Orangeville	St. Mary's General Hospital - Kitchener
Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital - Burlington	Trillium Health Centre - Mississauga
Lakeridge Health Corp. - Oshawa	Whitby Mental Health Centre - Whitby
Markham Stouffville Hospital - Markham	York Central Hospital - Richmond Hill