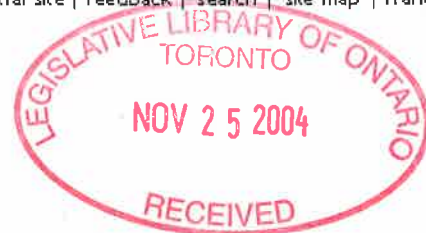


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Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

McGuinty government takes another step in improving care and standards in long-term care homes

All Ontarians Can Access New Website For Information

TORONTO, Nov. 16 /CNW/ - The McGuinty government is making long-term care homes more accountable for the care they provide to residents with the launch of a public reporting website, the first of its kind in Canada, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Through this new website, all seniors and their families will be able to access the information they need to make an informed decision when choosing a long-term care home," Smitherman said. "This will increase accountability and improve quality of care."

The public reporting website provides information to seniors and their families about individual homes and their records of care. Ontarians looking for a long-term care home can access the website at www.health.gov.on.ca. People who do not have Internet access can phone the LTC Action Line at 1-866-434-0144 and the information will be mailed to them. They may also contact their local Community Care Access Centre for this information.

Long-term care homes must post a copy of their most recent inspection reports in a prominent place that is easily accessible to staff and residents, as well as family and loved ones.

"CARP is very pleased with the direction being taken by Queen's Park to ensure quality of life in long-term care homes," said Judy Cutler, of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons. "We applaud the government for improving services, strengthening accountability and making a positive difference for residents and their families. An important recognition that these buildings are people's homes, and not just facilities."

In addition to launching the website, the government is introducing new regulations requiring:

- That a registered nurse be on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week in each long-term care home (effective Feb. 1, 2005)
- That each resident be given at least two baths or showers per week (effective January 1, 2005)
- All planned food menus and menu cycles be reviewed and approved in writing by each home's dietician at least once a year (effective January 1, 2005)

The website will report to the public about individual homes' compliance with these and other government requirements.

"This continues the revolution we have begun in long-term care," said Smitherman. "Our seniors deserve to live in comfort, while being treated with dignity and respect. We are making that happen."

This news release, along with other media materials, such as matte stories and audio clips, on other subjects, are available on our website at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca> under the News Media section.

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Technical inquiries: ogmaster@newswire.ca