

Attention News Editors:**Government improves access to substance abuse services**

\$8.7 million will bring new services to areas of need

TORONTO, Sept. 10 /CNW/ - Today's investment in community addictions treatment will mean better treatment for Ontarians struggling to overcome dependence on alcohol, illicit drugs and problem gambling. The announcement was welcomed by provincial addictions and mental health providers.

George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, announced today that the Government of Ontario will provide community-based addiction agencies with a 8.7 million increase in funds, and make investments in new addiction services in areas of the province in need of greater services.

"Addiction treatment works," said Norma Medulun, Chair of Addictions Ontario. "These services reduce dependency, improve the health of clients, and have enormous economic benefits. By providing all service providers with a funding increase, the Government is ensuring that cost of living pressures won't diminish our capacity to provide these services."

"Today, the Government has recognized that addiction services must be improved in areas where access is poor," said David Kelly, Executive Director of the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addictions Programs. "Addiction services are a critical part of health care. The government is to be congratulated on expanding services where population growth and demand greatly exceeds service capacity, while providing increased support to all providers in the province. Addiction and mental health providers see these types of investments as ways to address the huge social and economical costs of addiction."

For More Information:

Addictions Ontario (AO) www.addictionsontario.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario (CMHA ON) www.ontario.cmha.ca

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) www.camh.net

Ontario Association of Patient Councils (OAPC) (416) 633-9420

Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs (OFCMHAP) www.ofcmhap.on.ca

Ontario Peer Development Initiative (OPDI) www.opdi.org



This partnership was developed in 2004, and is comprised of six organizations that include: Addictions Ontario, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Ontario Association of Patient Councils (OAPC), Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs (OFCMHAP) and Ontario Peer Development Initiative (OPDI). Together, they are committed to raising the profile of mental illness and addictions in Ontario, and to supporting the needs of those living with mental health and addictions problems, their families, and their communities.

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