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MEDIA RELEASE

Fair Provincial Funding for Health Care

Kitchener, ON – The Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce has called on the Ontario government to provide a more equitable distribution of health care funding based on population needs.

A recent study completed by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP indicated that provincial support for hospital services in high-growth communities such as the GTA/905, Dufferin County, Simcoe County, Wellington County, and Waterloo Region is \$255 per resident less than the rest of Ontario. The Waterloo-Wellington Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) received hospital funding at \$730 per resident in 2008/09, an amount \$279 less than the provincial average.

“The Waterloo Region business community recognizes the importance of health care services in attracting both employers and employees to our community, and we hope that Finance Minister Dwight Duncan, addresses the regional hospital funding inequity in the 2009 Ontario Budget,” said Joan Fisk, President and CEO of the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce.

“Government support must be maintained at a level consistent with our population growth.”

In a presentation before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs of the Ontario Legislature last December, the Chamber recommended that the provincial government immediately review the funding formula and focus on hospitals serving high-growth areas. Allocations for critical services should be more efficiently distributed using a Population Needs-Based formula.

Also, the 2009 Federal Budget indicated that Ontario will receive a significant per capita increase in funding under the Canada Health Transfer for 2009/10. This measure will ensure equity with other Canadian provinces and provides an opportunity for the provincial government to initiate strategic investments into the system.

“Due to provincial inequities in hospital support, access to services is being reduced,” said Fisk. “The funding model should be adjusted to allow more staff and improved facilities to meet local needs.”

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