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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

AccessON Campaign Raises Awareness About Accessibility Among Public, Business And Government

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is launching a new public awareness campaign called *AccessON: Breaking Barriers Together* to increase accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities, Minister of Community and Social Services and Minister Responsible for People with Disabilities, Madeleine Meilleur announced today.

“This campaign will challenge public attitudes and perceptions about disability,” said Meilleur. “It will give people a better understanding about how barriers impact daily living for people with disabilities, and it will encourage all Ontarians to become actively involved in making our businesses, governments and communities accessible to everyone.”

According to Statistics Canada, approximately 1.5 million people, or 13 per cent of Ontarians, have disabilities and that is expected to increase to 20 per cent in 20 years, as the population ages.

In 2005, the McGuinty government passed landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which will make Ontario full accessible by 2025. The Act allows people with disabilities, representatives of the business community and the public sector to work together to develop province-wide accessibility standards in areas such as customer service, transportation and the physical environment.

www.AccessON.ca offers information, tools and resources to both, the general public as well as the business community and broader public sector.

“This is just the beginning of how we plan to use AccessON to increase awareness of the need for accessibility,” said Meilleur. “Our goal is to expand the website and campaign to involve more and more Ontarians to spread the word that an accessible Ontario is a stronger, more inclusive Ontario for all of us.”

The development of the public education campaign on accessibility is just one more example of how, working together, Ontarians have achieved results in building a province where everyone has a chance to contribute. The government has also:

- Committed more than \$500 million in new funding since 2003 to strengthen community supports for adults with a developmental disability.

- Invested nearly \$11 million in interpreter and intervenor services for deaf and deafblind Ontarians.
- Provided \$28.2 million to help universities and colleges provide services for students with disabilities to help them succeed.

“Knowledge is power,” said Meilleur. “This campaign will help more people understand the different barriers that exist out there for people with disabilities and how together, we can make Ontario accessible for everyone.”

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