



Canadian Society of Gastroenterology Nurses & Associates

May 9, 2006

The Honourable George Smitherman
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for Ontario
Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Smitherman,

The Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) and the Canadian Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates (CSGNA) were delighted to read your recently announced HealthForceOntario Strategy which includes a colon cancer screening program.

As you know from recent correspondence sent to your office, the CAG and CSGNA have long been concerned about access to digestive health care. In 2004 the CAG launched a comprehensive program that included setting evidence-based targets for appropriate wait times for gastroenterological care, while concurrently measuring actual waiting times across the country. We have now documented excessive waiting times in virtually all areas of the country including Ontario, and findings indicate that we are a long way from meeting set targets.

We therefore support your efforts to improve health care access and your willingness to consider innovative approaches. As the national bodies representing Canadian gastroenterologists and Canadian gastroenterology nurses, we are ideally positioned to support you and welcome the opportunity to lend our expertise, in particular regarding education, training and credentialing. For example, the CAG is currently involved in setting quality and credentialing standards related to the performance of endoscopy. Such standards will help ensure that government investment related to endoscopy provides the best possible outcomes for patients.

Again, we applaud your efforts and look forward to working with you to achieve optimal health care for Ontarians.

Sincerely,

William G. Paterson, MD, FRCPC
President, CAG

Nancy Campbell, RN, CGN(C)
President, CSGNA

c. Provincial Ministers of Health
Provincial Gastroenterology Society Presidents