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**Cancer drug cash flowing  
GRITS OPEN WALLET AFTER SUN STORY**  
By [ANTONELLA ARTUSO](#), QUEEN'S PARK BUREAU CHIEF

CANCER PATIENT Doug Henderson, who paid out of pocket for U.S. treatment denied him in Ontario, says he's pleased others won't have to go through his ordeal. Ontario Health Minister George Smitherman said yesterday that the Liberal government is increasing the Cancer Care Ontario budget for new drugs by \$15 million.

"We have already indicated to Cancer Care Ontario that we will make an investment of at least 25% more for the cancer drugs that they deem necessary to provide the utmost of care," Smitherman said.

Henderson, who was featured on the front page of yesterday's Toronto Sun, said he paid about \$50,000 to travel to Indianapolis and receive Rituxan, a treatment that would have cost him about \$12,000 in Ontario. The province did not allow him to buy the drug here, and was not eligible to be funded by CCO.

Henderson said the new funding should help others who can't afford to go south for Rituxan, a drug noted for far fewer side effects than traditional chemotherapy in many cancer patients. Henderson credited the Sun's coverage and the work of Tory MPP Cam Jackson, who has been pressing Smitherman to free up funds for new cancer drugs.

"It's a pretty impressive result," he said.

Cancer Care Ontario has now approved expanded use of Rituxan, but as of Tuesday was still awaiting financial assistance from the Ministry of Health to begin reimbursing patients.

Chris Kuzik, 59, who suffered a heart attack during regular chemotherapy, was also denied Rituxan and travelled to Rochester for the treatment.

"I went there last fall and I asked the doctor could I come on (the drug treatment), and he looked at me and said, 'You're from Canada, you have no drug plan; you can't afford me,'" Kuzik said. "I starting crying."

The doctor called him a week later and offered a reduced price of about \$20,000 U.S.

"I had no side effects; I've got my hair; I've put on 30-40 pounds since then," he said.

