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Ontario Drug Reform – One Year Later

Toronto, June 27, 2007 - One year after Ontario introduced a comprehensive package to reform its publicly funded drug plans, a review of the promises made and kept produces an overall grade of 65%. The report "Ontario Drug Reform – One Year Later" was prepared by patient groups and advocates who assessed the status of 26 distinct commitments.

Of the 26 commitments, 10 were fully implemented, 7 were partially implemented, 8 were not implemented and the status of 1 commitment remains unknown. Partially implemented refers to commitments that are clearly underway with enough momentum to ensure completion. Seventeen commitments were fully or partially implemented.

- Progress was slower than expected, especially for the commitments to benefit patients. Those were scored at 60% implemented or partially implemented.
- While many commitments for transparency were kept, some important commitments such as disclosure of the rationale for drug decisions were not kept. The commitments relating to transparency were scored at 70% implemented or partially implemented.
- Commitments to improve the operations of the drug system were scored at 65% implemented or partially implemented. These are system management and cost saving initiatives to find \$222 million that would permit reinvestment in drug programs.

The *Transparent Drug System for Patients Act* or Bill 102 was signed into law on June 20, 2006. The Honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, called this legislation the cornerstone of the government's comprehensive plan to reform Ontario's drug system. The 26 commitments were part of the government's 5-part plan to:

- Strengthen the governance and operations of the public drug system,
- Improve access for patients to drugs,
- Promote the appropriate use of drugs,
- Reward innovation,
- Strengthen Ontario's position as a customer to get value-for-money.

The full text of the report can be found on the websites listed below.

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