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## MEDIA RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

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### *Successful Hips & Knees Program Approved for Funds*

The successful Hips & Knees Program at the Strathroy site of the Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA) will continue through this year with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) funding further surgeries until March 31, 2008. "The Ministry has approved us to perform an additional 125 total joint replacement surgeries for this fiscal year. That will bring the total for April 2007 to March 2008 of 275 joints.," Mike Mazza, CEO of Middlesex Hospital Alliance, says.

The news was conveyed to the MHA through the new Local Health Integration Network (LHIN). These Ontario non-profit organizations are now responsible for planning, integrating and funding health services, including hospitals. The large Southwest LHIN stretches from south of Strathroy to the top of the Bruce Peninsula.

The MHA team is receiving some well-earned praise with this program which was recently showcased at the Ontario Hospital Association convention in Toronto.

"Our wait times are significantly below the Ministry target and the provincial average," Nancy Maltby-Webster, COO at MHA, says. For example, during September to November 2007, the Ministry target wait time for a Hip or Knee replacement was 182 days; MHA's time was 69 days for knees and 67 for hips. This represents the shortest wait time not only within the SW LHIN, but provincially also. The provincial average during this same time was 280 days for knees and 208 days for hips.

The success of MHA's team approach is seen in the excellent wait times but also in the reported satisfaction from patients. The first 150 patients were interviewed at two and then at six weeks after their surgeries. They were questioned about pain, mobility and overall satisfaction with the experience. More than 90 per cent of patients reported an "excellent" experience. Says Maltby-Webster, "Eighty-seven per cent of our Hip & Knee patients meet discharge expectations, which generally means they return home after a shorter than average hospital stay, with pain managed and on target with their mobility."