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MEDIA RELEASE

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Middlesex Hospital Alliance Diabetes Coordinator Receives Award

Alison Lenny, the coordinator of the Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA), Diabetes Education Centre (DEC), was recently the recipient of the 2009 Outstanding Health Professional Award from the Canadian Diabetes Association. "I was very honored to be nominated for this award by my team. The award recognizes our program's approach to improve access to diabetes education using a rural approach and targeting high risk groups such as aboriginals, mental health and seniors. It wouldn't have been possible without the expertise and commitment of our team, support from our administration and our community partners," Lenny says.

The awards ceremony held last on April 22, at the Best Western Stoneridge Inn in London, is coordinated through the southwest regional Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) office and is part of the Regional Annual Meeting, Cindy Silva, public programs and services coordinator for Southwest Ontario CDA, says. This year, along with Lenny's Outstanding Health Professional award, the CDA presented 33 Volunteer Service Awards and four other community-based awards, including Camp Award, Outstanding Corporate Award, Outstanding Partnership Award, Young Volunteer Award. Volunteer Service Awards are presented to individuals who have volunteered with the Association from five to 30 years. The awards are presented by CDA London Regional Leadership Centre.

Established over 50 years ago, the Canadian Diabetes Association is a charitable organization that has grown to include a presence in more than 150 communities across the country. The CDA promotes the health of Canadians through diabetes research, education, service and advocacy and works in communities across the country to promote the health of Canadians and eliminate diabetes through our strong nationwide network of volunteers, employees, healthcare professionals, researchers, partners and supporters.

The Outstanding Health Professional Award is presented to a health professional who has made a difference in improving the lives of individuals living with diabetes in a specific region. This award focuses on the work of a health professional within a medical field, rather than an individual working for the Association on a volunteer basis.

Middlesex Hospital Alliance's cataract program - under ophthalmologist Dr. Rogelstad's direction and with the surgical and ambulatory care teams at Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital - has implemented new technologies and procedures which have reduced the time it takes to complete cataract surgery. "Our cataract program boasts one of the shortest average waiting times in the region," Nancy Maltby-Webster, Chief Operating Officer for the MHA, says.

In recognizing this successful program, the Ministry of Health recently provided MHA with funding for 204 more cataract procedures. "This funding is a great boost to our program and to the outpatient surgical services for the MHA," Maltby-Webster says.

Middlesex Hospital Alliance has one of the shortest waiting times in the area for cataract surgery, according to a review by the Ontario Wait Time strategy - a wait time of approximately 60 days, compared to a provincial average of 93 days. The Wait Time strategy, launched in early 2005, is a program of the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care designed to provide Ontarians with access to care with shorter wait times.

Maltby-Webster recently reported this Wait Time success to the MHA Board, providing the Board with a demonstration of the Ministry's Wait Time web site - www.ontariowaittimes.com.

Says CEO Mike Mazza, "the 15 million dollar expansion and renovation to the Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital site of the MHA has provided substantial improvement to efficiency. Coupled with Dr. Rogelstad's surgical technique, we are in the enviable position of supplying high quality service for a much in demand procedure."