

*Monday, November 13, 2006*

## MEDIA RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

*For more information  
contact:*

**Michael Mazza**

Chief Executive Officer

519 245-5295 ext. 5592

### *Emergency Departments Connect with Provincial Drug Information*

A new initiative that accesses a provincial electronic drug information system goes live today at both of the Emergency departments of Middlesex Hospital Alliance.

The system, known as the Drug Profile Viewer (DPV) System, provides the secure sharing of prescription drug claim histories of Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) recipients - and those using the Trillium Drug Program - for hospital Emergency departments. For example, if a patient arrives at Emergency unconscious or incoherent – or simply can't recall all of the medications and dosages prescribed – the emergency medical staff can quickly retrieve this information from the DPV System.

“If the patient is an ODB recipient, he or she won't need to bring medications or try to recall what medications have been prescribed. It will all be in the system. It will benefit both patients and doctors to have this information available in emergency situations,” Dr. Andrew Whynot, Chief of Emergency at Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital, says.

DPV is an initiative of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in collaboration with Canada Health Infoway, an independent, not-for-profit national corporation. The system accesses prescription drug information maintained by the Ministry, for recipients of the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program and the Trillium Drug Program. There are 2.1 million ODB recipients in Ontario – the majority of whom are seniors, who can frequently be prescribed many different medications. According to Ministry figures 13 per cent of acute care admissions for seniors are for complications from pharmaceutical medications.

“For a patient, especially in an emergency situation, it can be difficult to remember medication names and dosages. It also saves a patient from needing to repeat drug information to multiple health care providers, even at one visit. We have 27,000 visits annually to emergency at SMGH and 12,000 at Four Counties Health Services. This access to drug information will allow health care providers to quickly identify and prevent harmful drug reactions and provide more informed emergency care,” Dr. Whynot says.

“We have seen positive reports from other provinces in Canada regarding similar systems,” Mike Mazza, CEO of Middlesex Hospital Alliance, says. In recent years BC, Manitoba and Alberta have all implemented Emergency Department access to their medication databases and have documented positive outcomes. For instance, the system facilitates the care of patients who have difficulty remembering or communicating their medication name and dosage; saves Emergency Department staff time because they don’t have to call local pharmacies for information; and saves time and stress for family members who don’t have to go home to bring in a patient’s medication.

The Ontario system is currently available in 70 hospital emergency departments in the province. The access is immediate and available 24/7. Middlesex Hospital Alliance has been testing the system on site and training staff for the past two weeks in preparation for today’s launch.

“Technology such as this, which shares information about patient health and connects us to other partners, adds to our medical resources,” Mazza says, “Just as we are now employing Electronic Patient Records and filmless Digital Imaging, this technology also streamlines processes, connects us to our partners in healthcare, and ultimately, provides better patient care.”