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Cambridge Economic Development Wins Provincial Award Community Partnership Key to Success of Cambridge Health Link

Cambridge, Ontario. February 7, 2008...The Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) tonight paid tribute to the Cambridge Health Link initiative and the many community volunteers who worked to create this not for profit organization which provides a unique model of community healthcare service that has resulted in a boost of new doctors to the community.

Cambridge Health Link members and the City of Cambridge Economic Development staff picked up the trophy for "Product Development" tonight in Toronto at the 51th Annual EDCO Conference as part of the Presidents' dinner and awards ceremony. The provincial award recognizes the economic impact and uniqueness of the Cambridge Health Link which opened its doors on March 1st, 2007.

The Health Link initiative brings together community partners in the creation of a primary healthcare clinic. Health Link is 7,500 square feet of office space located at 350 Conestoga Blvd, also known as Canamera Medical Centre, which is a concentration of health services in the 70,584 square foot plaza. The remainder of services in the plaza include offerings in areas such as hearing, cosmetics, orthodontics, dentistry, X-ray, ultrasound, pharmacy and family medicine.

"The City of Cambridge contributed \$250,000 to Cambridge Health Link to capital costs related to lease hold improvements and a further loan guarantee of \$300,000," says Leah Bozic, Senior Economic Development Officer and a member of the Cambridge Health Link board of directors. "It's not just about the bricks and mortar. Health Link is a collaborative model, offering a modern, well-staff medical facility that is ready for new doctors to set up shop immediately. New doctors can hit the ground running and begin their practice right away without the worry of creating the infrastructure needed for an office and family practice." Bozic notes that Health Link physician are members of a Family Health Team which provides allied health professionals such as a nurse practitioner and dietician.

Cambridge was the first urban centre in Southern Ontario to be designated as underserved with respect to family doctors. In the past two years, there have been approximately 16 new doctors who have established in the community. That means a whopping 24,000 patients can be taken off the waiting list for a family doctor.

Donna Gravelle, Chair of the Doctor Recruitment Task Force, says this community is fortunate to have the City of Cambridge take the leadership role in creating measures for success given the needs of the community. "We are luckier than many underserved communities because our municipality is engaged and dedicating resources to get results," says Gravelle. She adds that the Health Link was definitely a factor in the recent successes to attract new doctors to the community.

Angela Asadoorian, Chair of Cambridge Health Link, says she is so pleased to see this important initiative recognized by economic developers throughout Ontario. "It is remarkable to witness the level of cooperation from the Cambridge community. We have mentors like Dr. Russell Ashton, affiliation with Two Rivers Family Health Team and many others in the community who are part of the team."

The latest breaking news for Cambridge that will certainly support physician recruitment efforts is the announcement by Cambridge Memorial Hospital that it will become a teaching facility for McMaster School of Medicine. The newly announced relationship with McMaster means community-based teaching, educational excellence and innovation happens in Cambridge and many new physicians will be exposed to the marvelous attributes of this community.

Cambridge residents who still require a primary healthcare doctor may put their name on a list prepared by the Doctor Recruitment Task Force by visiting http://www.cambridgechamber.com/physician_recruitment.php

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The City of Cambridge is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. It is strategically located astride highway 401 in Southwestern Ontario, part of Canada's Technology Triangle. In 2007, the population reached over 124,000 people with a multicultural mix and a strong foundation of support services. Cambridge has a diverse economic base with leading industries in manufacturing, automotive, high technology, pharmaceutical, business and financial services and hospitality/retail. The Corporation of the City of Cambridge is an employer with a work environment that offers the opportunity to provide service to the community through creativity and innovation, and with opportunities for career growth and advancement.

For more information on the area or the corporation visit www.cambridge.ca
The City of Cambridge press room is located at <http://www.cambridge.ca/article.php?sid=176>

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