

July 14, 2008 -- Community Family Health Centres launch gets underway this weekend
This Saturday, July 19th from 4 to 8 pm the official launch to kick off the campaign to build two Community Family Health Centres in The Town of the Blue Mountains and Meaford will get underway. The afternoon of family fun is really a celebration of the start of the campaign and to raise public awareness of the project. Look for the tents at the municipal offices at the Town of the Blue Mountains, 25 Bridge Street, Thornbury.

Co-chairs of the event, Jackie Stewart and Diane Hanoski have a full range of fun, family activities planned for the afternoon. These included a military field hospital from LFCA TC Meaford, firetrucks, a demonstration by the OPP, entertainment with the Georgian Sound and Steve Diver's Band plus many more activities to be finalized. A beer and wine tent will be onsite along with free hamburgers and soft drinks. And of course there will be lots of information available about the Community Family Health Centres. The official launch will be at 6 p.m. with greetings from Mayor Ellen Anderson, The Town of the Blue Mountains, Mayor Francis Richardson of the Municipality of Meaford and Pat Campbell, CEO of the Grey Bruce Health Services.

The fundraising to build two community family health centres is the first step toward having a health centre in The Town of the Blue Mountains (to be built first) followed with a health centre in Meaford. These community family health centres are of utmost importance toward attracting new doctors to this area.

The North East Grey Health Clinics Inc. (NEGHI) which is the group heading up physician recruitment in this area, has stated, "The recruitment experience of family doctors has made this committee acutely aware of this area's lack of a competitive edge in attracting new doctors. It is very important to new doctors to have facilities available so they can practice together in a supportive environment. Today's family physicians are seeking a turnkey operation where the administrative and business functions are offered without a need for the doctor to be accountable for the operation of the family health centre."

The catchment area served by the Meaford General Hospital has been deemed to be under-served by four doctors, by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. Also in a study completed recently, over 2000 people in the area responded that they did not have a doctor. Additional data indicates the 55+ population in this area is expected to increase by more than 40 percent over the next 10 years creating a greater need for family physicians. The viability of the Meaford Hospital is at stake if the services of family physicians are not available to sustain both the inpatient service and the Emergency Department. All family physicians coming into the Family Health Centres will be required to seek privileges and provide services at the Meaford Hospital.

With the population growth in Blue Mountains being greater than Meaford at the present time and two physicians in Clarksburg recently retiring the first Community Family Health Centre will be built in the Blue Mountains where the need is greatest. Once that health centre has been completed work towards a centre in Meaford will start.

Come out on Saturday and enjoy the fun and learn about the exciting plans to build two Community Family Health Centres in The Blue Mountains and Meaford. Saturday, July 19th 4 to 8 p.m. with lots of family fun and entertainment at The Blue Mountains Municipal Offices, Highway 26, Thornbury.

-30•

For further information please contact:

Wayne McFarlane Chairman of the Community Family Health Centres Fundraising-Committee at 519-599-2181 or email: wmcfarlane@rogers.com