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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Middlesex Hospital Alliance Hips & Knee Joint Replacement program is making a tremendous difference for orthopedic surgery patients

Milestone Reached at the Middlesex Hospital Alliance Hips & Knee Joint Replacement Program

Strathroy, ON -The 1,000th orthopedic joint replacement surgery was completed near the end of June at Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (SMGH). This is cause for a 'joint' celebration for patients and our local community Hospital.

Before the program began in December of 2006, most patients in the area in need of hip or knee replacement would wait an average of two years.

Now, the statistics show the average wait time from surgical consult to date of surgery is 120 days, well below the provincial target of 182 days.

The result has been orthopedic surgery service and consultation closer to home for residents.

With that kind of track record, the Hospital is optimistic that it will be able to continue to strengthen its surgical program; this means more and more patients will be able to get the surgery they need in a timely manner, and in a Hospital close to home.

"The Hospital's focus is on a strong surgical capacity and has developed a very cost-effective program. We have extremely low infection rates and high patient satisfaction. We've really had excellent results," says Nancy Maltby-Webster, Chief Operating Officer for the Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA).

Moving orthopedic surgery into the rural-based community Hospital has increased the surgical capacity within the South West Local Health Integration Network (SW LHIN), supporting one of the main priorities to reduce wait times for hip and knee surgery as set by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) under the "Wait-Time Strategy."

When SMGH was granted funding attached to joint replacements, the Hospital began to make a very positive contribution to the surgical services available to rural based residents.

"This program has given local residents access to sophisticated orthopedic surgical procedures, closer to home. It's better for patients to receive care locally with fewer

worries about travel, and where they have the support of friends and family,” says Dr. Paul Ferner, Chief of Staff for SMGH.

With operating funding from the South West LHIN, and community support through the SMGH Foundation, the Hospital continues to strengthen its surgical services with the most up to date, high-tech equipment for orthopedic procedures.

The orthopedic team is on target to exceed total joint replacement volumes of the over 200 completed last year. The creation of the joint program has also enhanced the MHA’s ability to address orthopedic emergency procedures of increased complexity and provide greater service coverage.

“The main reason a patient might have joint replacement surgery is to reduce pain and improve quality of life,” says Dr. Vaishnav Rajgopal, orthopedic surgeon, who meets with patients to discuss whether they’re a candidate for surgery through a physical examination of the joint and reviewing a patient’s CT scan, X-rays and other medical documents.

If a patient isn’t a candidate for surgery, Dr. Rajgopal can help them decide on other treatment options.

On September 27 at 11:30 a.m., Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital will host a special day of celebration to commemorate the 1000th joint replacement surgery and mark the success of this program. Community members, former hip & knee replacement patients, surgical services team members, rehabilitation and all Hospital staff will celebrate this special milestone on this date. If you would like more information about this event, please call 519-245-5295 ext. 5593.