

Health minister in town to visit health team office

By MELANIE HENNESSEY

The Champion

Ontario Health Minister George Smitherman stopped by yesterday morning to mark the official opening of a Prime Care Family Health Team (FHT) in Milton, which will help improve local residents' access to health care.

The team, being headed up by Dr. Garnet Maley, adds the services of a nurse practitioner and mental health worker to a group of three doctors who were already practising in Milton.

Together, the nurse practitioner and mental health worker will take on more than 3,000 patient visits each year.

"We are creating Family Health Teams because we know they're going to mean better access to better care for Ontarians," said Mr. Smitherman.

"The reason behind Family Health Teams is to address the access problem too many Ontarians are experiencing."

Dr. Maley noted the FHT will help out with the local doctor shortage, since the additional resources will help the team see more patients.

"It gives us an opportunity to provide improved access to quality health care for the people of Milton," he said.

Mr. Smitherman explained the FHTs enlarge the "circle of care" available to residents, meaning more options for health care.

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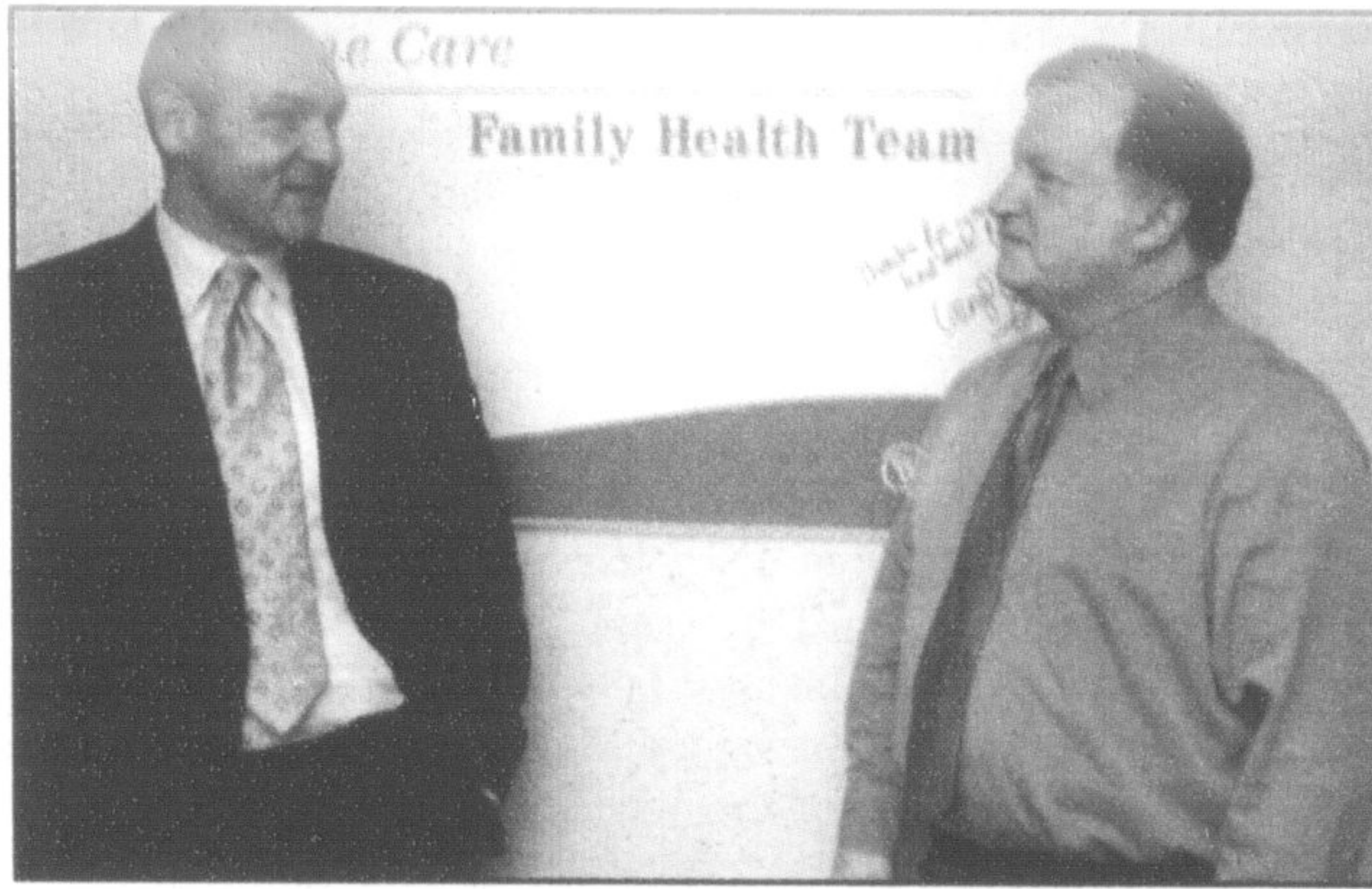


Photo by SABRINA BYRNES

Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman (left) chats with Dr. Garnet Maley.

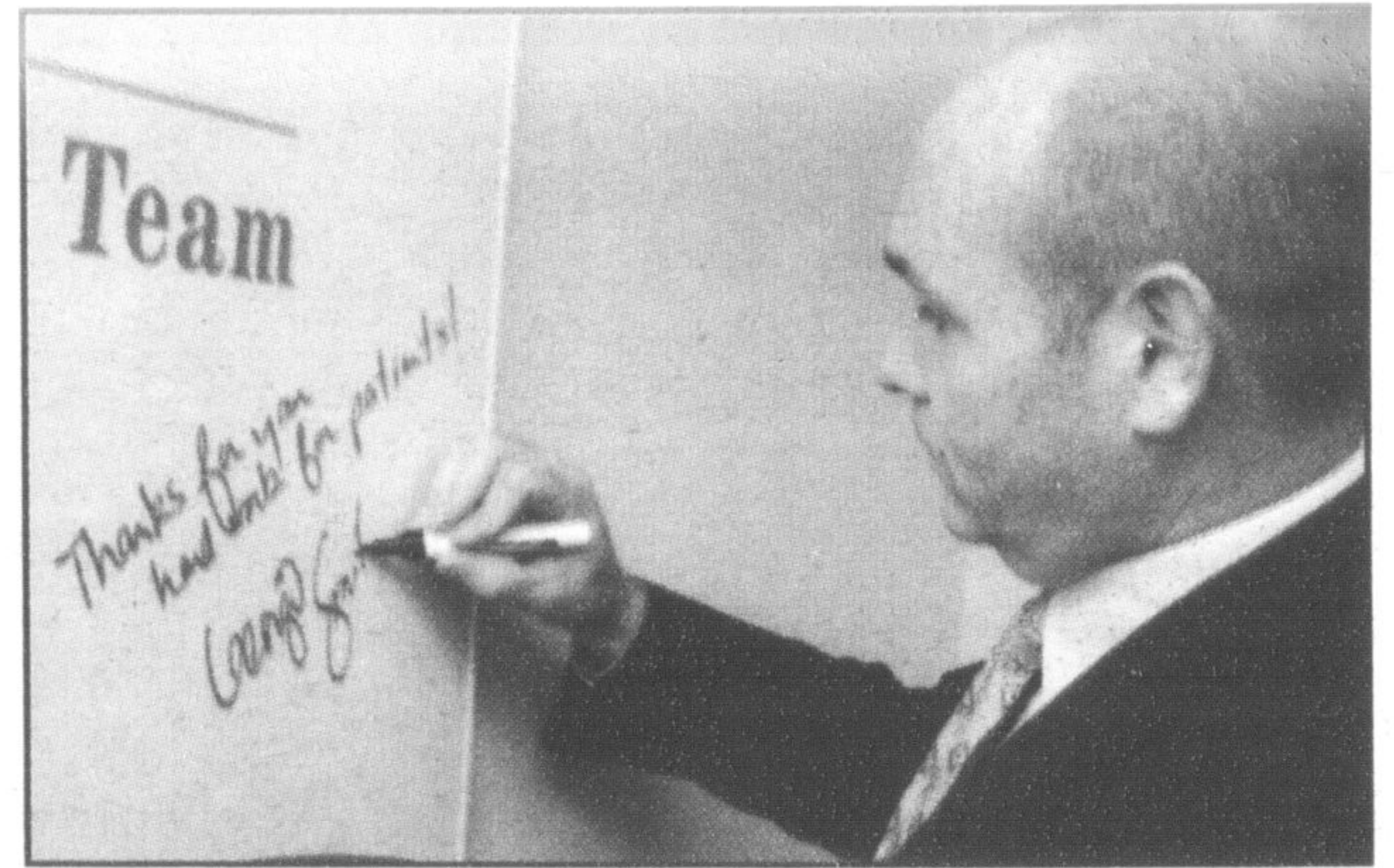


Photo by SABRINA BYRNES

Minister Smitherman writes a note on the new office sign.



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Minister Smitherman chats with patients Elsie Manford (left) and Walt Elliot along with nurse practitioner Christine Gignac.



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