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NEWS RELEASE

**MINISTER SMITHERMAN HAS ACTED RESPONSIBLY TO PROTECT
HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE CLIENTS BY CANCELLING THE RFP
PROCESS IN HAMILTON NIAGARA HALDIMAND BRANT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2008 (Ottawa, ON) – VON Canada was pleased to learn that the Honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long term Care and Deputy Premier has cancelled the RFP process in Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant which resulted in the disqualification of many high quality, long serving home and community care providers, including VON.

“We have been saying for sometime that the competitive bidding system is flawed, that it results in instability in the sector, seriously erodes our ability to recruit and retain staff and adversely affects the health of the community,” said Dr. Judith Shamian, President & CEO of VON Canada. “We would like to thank Minister Smitherman for taking the concerns of the community seriously and stopping the process and we look forward to working with the Minister and the CCAC to put in place a process that is truly advantageous to the client and places their needs above all else”.

VON Hamilton has been providing care in the area for more than 100 years. VON Canada recently received outstanding results from CCHSA, Canada's national accreditation council.

The past few weeks have been difficult for the staff and we would like to thank them for working through this with us. We would also like to thank The Honourable Ted McMeekin, MPP and Hamilton and Mountain MPP Sophia Aggelonitis for taking up the challenge. Finally we would like to thank our clients, the community and friends of VON for their outpouring of support during the past few weeks.

VON is dedicated to being a leader in the delivery of innovative comprehensive health and social services and to influencing the development of health and social policy in Canada. We are a national health organization and registered charity offering a wide range of community health care solutions that meet the needs of Canadians from coast to coast. VON is committed to continuous quality improvement and is accredited by the Canadian Council of Health Services Accreditation.

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