



Health Minister George Smitherman presents an Innovation Award to the Huron community Family Health Team and HealthKick Huron, which was accepted by HealthKick Manager and Gwen Devereaux.

## **FHT and Healthkick beat Ottawa, Toronto for award on healthcare innovation**

The Huron Family Health Team in Seaforth is already drawing attention from across the province. Chosen from among over 1,000 applications from across Ontario to be one of 200 displays at the Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo 2007 in Toronto, the Huron FHT, along with Healthkick Huron, won an award in innovation in health human resources at the expo.

As one of three finalists against health projects in Toronto and Ottawa, the Huron FHT was chosen by an independent panel of health experts for meeting criteria such as “innovative for the entire health care sector; easily replicated across the health care system; made smart, efficient use of resources; integrated team work; dealt with important priorities and challenges in the health care system.

“We thought it was quite a new approach,” says Ministry of Health spokesperson David Jensen.

He says the Huron FHT, along with the Healthkick project’s emphasis on educating youth about career opportunities, uses an approach that is “well-rounded and could easily be replicated across the province.

“It deals with a key issue in health human resources,” he says, adding that the shortage of healthcare professionals is an important issue facing everyone.

Gwen Devereaux, who along with Paul Nichol of the Huron Business Development Corporation, wrote the proposal for both Healthkick and the Huron FHT, says she’s “pretty excited” by the recognition being received for the project. “I don’t think there’s anything comparable across the province,” she says of the way Healthkick is targeting both high-school and college/university students and encouraging them to choose healthcare professional and return home to rural areas to work.

Accepting the award from Health Minister George Smitherman with Healthkick project manager Laura Overholt in Toronto, Devereaux says she thinks the Huron project won because of the broad range of people – from high school students on up – it’s seeking to interest in healthcare professions.

Devereaux says Huron-Bruce MPP Carol Mitchell deserves credit for helping with the launching of the Healthkick project.