



NEWS RELEASE

Ted Arnott, MPP
Wellington - Halton Hills

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Progress, finally, in providing life-saving drug

(Queen's Park) – Lucas Maciesza, 26, is now receiving the potentially life-saving medication he needs. The Wellington County resident had to wait as his family, friends and community pushed the Government of Ontario to cover the \$500,000-a-year drug.

"I want to thank Rick Maciesza, Lucas's father, for having the courage to speak out," said Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott. Mr. Arnott also thanked his colleagues, PC Health Critic Christine Elliott and former Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer, for their assistance and advice, as well as the media for bringing attention to this life-or-death situation.

"We're also very fortunate that so many health professionals spoke publicly about Lucas's critical need for this medication," he added.

According to published reports, eight patients in Ontario require access to Soliris, the drug therapy necessary to treat Paroxysmal Nocturnal Haemoglobinuria (PNH)—an extremely rare blood disorder.

"We're all very pleased that Lucas is finally receiving this medication, but this isn't over," Mr. Arnott said. "It appears he may require it for the foreseeable future, and we need the Minister's absolute assurance that the province will cover the cost."

The London Health Sciences Centre paid for the initial dose as Health Ministry officials are reportedly working with the makers of Soliris to determine who will continue to cover that long-term cost.

"The government needs to fix its broken policy when it comes to drug coverage," said Mr. Arnott. "What happened to Lucas makes it clear that Ontario needs a consistent policy—not one that depends on where a patient happens to live, and whether a particular hospital is in a position to cover the cost of medication."

In response to Lucas's situation, which Mr. Arnott learned about on Friday, November 19, he tracked down Rick Maciesza, e-mailed the Minister of Health to urge her immediate intervention. He also telephoned her senior staff and twice raised his case in the Legislature's daily Question Period.

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