



HURON PERTH
HEALTHCARE
ALLIANCE

August 28, 2024

CLINTON
PUBLIC HOSPITAL

ST. MARYS
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

SEAFORTH
COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

STRATFORD
GENERAL HOSPITAL

Colin Best, President
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
155 University Ave., Suite 800
Toronto, Ontario M5H 3B7

Kimberly Moran, Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Medical Association (OMA)
150 Bloor St. West, Suite 900
Toronto, ON M5S 3C1
Canada

Re: Primary Care Access in Ontario

Dear Colin and Kimberly:

I am writing to you in my capacity as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA), an organization that includes the Clinton Public Hospital, St. Marys Memorial Hospital, Seaforth Community Hospital and Stratford General Hospital.

More specifically, this letter is in response to the OMA and the AMO's joint efforts to engage municipal governments in advocating to the Province for improved access to primary care. With close to 2.5 million Ontarians without access to primary care this is clearly a top health care priority locally, provincially and nationally and the OMA has an important role to play in charting a course forward that ensures improved access to comprehensive, teams-based primary care.

The HPHA directly and indirectly interacts with 23 municipal governments – 4 Upper Tier, 16 lower Tier, the City of Stratford and the Separated Municipality of the Towns of Goderich and St. Marys, and, as such has been approached a number of times to provide commentary on the draft council resolution jointly prepared by the OMA and AMO, which reads:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of (the name of municipality) urge the Province of Ontario to recognize the physician shortage in (name of municipality) and Ontario, to fund health care appropriately and ensure every Ontarian has access to physician care.

46 General Hospital Drive
Stratford, Ontario
N5A 2Y6
Tel: 519-272-8210
Fax: 519-271-7137
administration@hpha.ca
www.hpha.ca

Clearly, timely access to primary care is instrumental to maximizing the health and wellness of Ontarians, with the widening gap between those who have access and those who don't an increasing concern. In the case of the HPHA, erosion of access to comprehensively trained primary care providers impacts both primary care across our communities and hospital-based services, the latter due to the important role primary care physicians play in supporting hospital in-patient units and emergency departments across 3 of our 4 sites. As such, the HPHA is highly motivated to support and where necessary lead local, provincial and national discussions on the steps necessary to strengthening the social and health supports that are foundational to improving the health and well-being of our population.

In helping the HPHA support your efforts with our municipal partners, and as the resolution does not include any specifics, input into the following would be helpful:

1. Is the OMA advancing teams-based primary care, including physicians and other health care professionals as the preferred model for primary care delivery?
2. While it is recognized that standards may vary depending on practice type i.e. urban primary care vs rural primary care/emergency/hospital, is the OMA advancing minimum standards for physicians in areas including roster size and availability? This could include supporting physicians being responsible for a local population as opposed to individual practice rosters;
3. Does the OMA support geographic assignment for physicians to facilitate equitable distribution across the province, notably in rural and northern communities where shortages are presently most acutely felt?
4. Is the OMA advancing national and international licensing discussions to improve responsible access to the Ontario market for physicians?
And;
5. Is the OMA involved in discussions with Canadian medical schools in relation to better alignment of demand for, and supply of physicians?

Few issues are more topical to our population than timely access to health care. The reality in which we find ourselves with primary care is the result of decades of decisions/non-decisions by all who directly and indirectly influence the health care file in this province. Changing this reality will require hard work by all of us however, with a commitment to collective accountability we can proactively and quickly begin to move the needle towards comprehensive pan-provincial access.

I look forward to hearing from you and can be reached directly at 519-274-0021.

Respectfully,



Andrew Williams B.Sc.(Hon), MHSA, CHE
President & Chief Executive Officer
Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance

cc: Matthew Anderson, President & Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Health
Anthony Dale, President & Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Hospital Association
John Wilkinson, Board Chair, HPHA
Dr. Kevin Lefebvre, Chief of Staff, HPHA
Chief Administrative Officers:
County of Huron
Municipality of Bluewater, Municipality of Central Huron, Municipality of Huron East, Municipality of Morris-Turnberry, Municipality of South Huron, Town of Goderich, Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh, Township of Howick, Township of North Huron
County of Lambton
Municipality of Lambton Shores, Middlesex County, Municipality of Lucan Biddulph, Municipality of Thames Centre,
Oxford County
Township of Zorra, Township of East Zorra-Tavistock
County of Perth
Municipality of North Perth, Municipality of West Perth, Township of Perth East, Township of Perth South
City of Stratford
Town of St. Marys