



January 28, 2019

Heather Watt
Chief of Staff
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Hepburn Block
10th Floor
80 Grosvenor St.
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

Ms. Watt,

Please be advised that at their January 22nd meeting, The Council of the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS family physicians are key to the success of the Family Health Team model that provides quality and specialized healthcare to communities in rural Ontario and to the residents of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh;

AND WHEREAS the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) are currently in arbitration regarding the Physician Services Agreement;

AND WHEREAS the current position of the MOHLTC will adversely affect rural communities by creating physician shortages and loss of medical services to the public;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh supports the review and modification of the position of the MOHLTC in the ongoing arbitration of the Physician Services Agreement in order to consider and take into account the impact it will have on rural communities.

Background:

Family physicians provide the bulk of all aspects of medical care in small towns and rural areas (primary care clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, hospice, etc), including acting as coroners, and participating in the education of physicians and other health providers.

In compliance with provincial policy, medical care in these areas is currently comprehensive and collaborative with physicians working through Family Health Organization or Family Health Network (FHO/FHN) delivery models.

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Adoption of these models allowed Family Health Teams (FHTs) to be created. FHTs brought additional resources and access to specialized care from practitioners such as dietitians, social workers, psychologists, adolescent/child councillors, diabetes educators, nurses and nurse practitioners. As a result, these previously inaccessible resources are available in small towns and rural areas.

The Ontario Medical Association (OMA) and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) are currently in arbitration regarding the existing Physician Services Agreement. The MOHLTC arbitration position towards primary care is problematic for small and rural areas. Along with a reduction in physician compensation there would be mandated hours physicians have to spend in the office during the week, plus evening and weekend office hours. To comply with the MOHLTC requirements these physicians would not be able to work anywhere other than their medical office, greatly limiting or eliminating their ability to staff hospitals, nursing homes, or hospices. These physicians will not be able to staff the ER, care for admitted in-patients, provide anesthesia and surgical assistance in the operating room or with deliveries. They will not be available to fulfill administrative duties at these facilities, or to be on call for or work extra evenings and weekends in any of these facilities when already mandated to work one evening a week and every 3rd weekend in a medical clinic.

With the MOHLTC position, the very feasibility of FHO/FHN models is in question and with it the services and resources provided by FHTs.

In short, the MOHLTC primary care arbitration position is particularly problematic for small towns and rural areas. Its negative effects will disproportionately impact these areas, almost immediately creating physician shortages and loss of medical services to the public.

The Council of the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh respectfully asks that the MOHLTC primary care arbitration position be reviewed and modified, and its impact on small towns and rural areas be considered.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Hallam', written in a cursive style.

Trevor Hallam
Deputy Clerk
Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh

Copied:
Lisa Thompson, MPP Huron-Bruce
All Huron County Municipalities