



Niagara Region

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON L2V 4T7
Telephone: 905-980-6000 Toll-free: 1-800-263-7215
Fax: 905-685-6243 www.niagararegion.ca



Memorandum

CL-C 72-2024

Subject: Physician Recruitment Community Roundtable

Date: August 29, 2024

To: Regional Council

From: Jim Bradley, Regional Chair
Ron Tripp, Chief Administrative Officer

We are writing to inform Council of a community roundtable that is tentatively scheduled for mid November, focused on addressing the pressing need to recruit more primary care and family physicians in the Niagara Region.

This memo is timed to coincide with the AMO/OMA motion on the agenda this evening, underscoring the urgency of our healthcare challenges and the necessity for municipalities to take a more active role in recruiting and retaining doctors.

Background:

The Niagara Region, like many other regions across Ontario, is experiencing a significant shortage of primary care physicians. This shortage is impacting our community's access to essential healthcare services, leading to increased wait times and strain on our healthcare infrastructure, including our local hospitals.

While the impact on the health and wellbeing of residents is self-evident, the shortage of primary care physicians has a downstream impact on EMS offload times, mental health, homelessness and the economy, which directly the Region's budget and property taxes.

A coordinated effort among Niagara's municipalities and healthcare institutions is paramount to developing sustainable solutions. It is also important to learn from apparent best practices, such as the success being witnessed in Welland, Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Niagara-on-the-Lake and St.Catharines with their recruitment incentive programs.

Event Goals:

The November meeting aims to address this issue by bringing together key community partners to:

Adopt a consistent understanding of the challenge – Ensure all parties have a collective understanding, through data sharing, of how an inadequate number of primary care physicians are impacting local health outcomes, the economy and the property taxes.

Learn from Best Practices - Share successful strategies and initiatives from other regions and municipalities that have effectively addressed similar challenges, enabling us to adopt and adapt these best practices for Niagara. Studying the success that has already been observed in our local communities will form part of the agenda.

Create a Coordinated Approach – Discuss opportunities to foster collaboration among municipalities, healthcare providers, and other community partners to streamline efforts and resources dedicated to physician recruitment and retention.

Sign an MOU of Cooperation - Establish a formal commitment through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to ensure ongoing cooperation and collective action towards achieving our shared goals.

It is important to note that the Region is seeking ways to support, amplify and enhance the current efforts on recruitment and retention. We believe there is already a great deal of good work being undertaken by a number of communities across Niagara and our goal is to both enrich those efforts, and determine if there are gaps that we could potentially fill.

Attendees:

The roundtable will bring together representatives from:

- The Niagara Region
- The 12 local area municipalities
- Niagara Health
- Hamilton Health Sciences

Other subject matter experts will be invited to attend to provide informed insights and perspectives.

Conclusion:

This event represents a pivotal step towards securing the healthcare professionals necessary to meet the needs of our community. By leveraging the collective expertise and resources of all community partners, we can develop a more robust and effective strategy for physician recruitment and retention in Niagara.

We look forward to your support and participation in this important initiative.

Jim Bradley
Regional Chair

Ron Tripp, P. Eng
Chief Administrative Officer