

# Physician Recruitment Update

Planning and Economic Development Committee

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**Jill Croteau, Physician Recruiter**

# Overview of the Physician Recruitment Program

01

The **Physician Recruitment Program** works to **attract, retain, and support** family physicians in Niagara to address **primary care shortages**.

02

In **November 2024**, the program moved from **Public Health to Economic Development**, strengthening **strategic marketing and outreach efforts**.

03

Works with **municipalities, clinic leads, economic development, and health sector partners** to coordinate recruitment efforts.

04

Enhanced **communications, promotional materials, and physician engagement** to position Niagara as a **top destination for medical professionals**.

05

Despite recent recruitment success, **ongoing retirements and population growth** continue to drive demand for **long-term recruitment strategies**.

# State of Primary Care in Niagara

- **Niagara welcome 26 new physicians** in 2024 marking a record year for recruitment. 7 more will start in Q1/Q2, 2025.
- **31 physicians are currently accepting patients**, the highest number at one time on the Niagara Region's "Find a Doctor" page.
- **2024 was our most successful year on record** for physician recruitment, but with Niagara's growing population, we continue working to meet increasing healthcare demands.



# Challenges and Opportunities



- Ongoing primary care shortages and increasing patient waitlists
- **14%** of current physicians are **over 65** and nearing retirement
- **Expansion of medical school seats** by Ontario Government provides future opportunity
- **Strengthened partnerships** with municipalities, clinics, and post-secondary institutions



# International Recruitment Efforts

- Physician recruitment initiatives in the U.S., U.K., Ireland, and Australia.
- Over **60% of new Niagara physicians** recruited from the U.K.
- **Key recruitment events in 2024:**
  - Career MD Fair (Boston, February 2024) – Engaged with specialists and Canadian-trained doctors
  - U.K. Career Fair (Birmingham, June 2024) – Connected with 70+ family physicians looking to relocate
  - AAFP Conference (Kansas City, August 2024) – Engaged with Canadian students in 175 U.S. medical schools
  - Repatriation Expo (Ireland, October 2024) – Connected with 150+ students and health authorities



# Strategic Partnerships



- Southern Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance (**SOPRA**) (Founded September 2023):
- **18 recruitment programs** across Ontario Health West
- **Shared database** and international marketing strategy
- Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance (**OPRA**) (Founded April 2024)
- Province-wide initiative to coordinate recruitment efforts

# Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

**Effective Region:**  
Supports workforce development and service delivery

**Equitable Region:**  
Expands access to healthcare for all residents

**Green & Resilient Region:** Contributes to sustainable healthcare solutions

**Prosperous Region:** Attracting physicians strengthens economic stability and growth



# Conclusion



**2024 was the strongest year on record for physician recruitment**



Continued commitment to attracting and retaining top medical talent



Ongoing collaboration with regional and municipal partners



Ensuring long-term access to primary care for Niagara residents



# Questions & Contact:

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