



Trevor Pinn, Director of Finance/Treasurer
Municipality of Clarington
40 Temperance St
Bowmanville, ON

Re: Clarington Physician Recruitment
2023 Program Proposal

The Municipality of Clarington is the fastest growing community in the Region of Durham with our current population at approximately 109,400 with populations projected to jump to 124,200 by 2027 and 221,000 by 2050.

The pandemic has brought to light the importance of a strong healthcare system. Our community-based family physicians are a key piece of this system, delivering comprehensive continuous care and ensuring primary care access to our community.

The recruitment of family physicians is not new to the Clarington community. There has been a longstanding commitment by community members and physicians to support these efforts using various approaches. These recruitment efforts have served Clarington well, supporting the successful recruitment of many family physicians.

Through community collaboration, Clarington welcomed twenty-five new family doctors between March 2007 and January 2017, averaging 2.5 new doctors per year. This provided over 30,000 residents with access to comprehensive primary care close to home.

The success experienced through this period was due to several factors, including the work of resolute professionals from our community doing outreach and consulting with medical schools and other provincial resources. In addition, financial incentives were created to incent new family physicians to set up practice in the area. An investment of \$440,000.00 from the Clarington Economic Development Fund was leveraged over this 10-year period, creating a competitive advantage for our community.

In addition, Clarington's family physicians invested significant effort to strengthen their relationship with Queen's University, bringing the Queen's family medicine training program and teaching family medicine residents here in our community. Several of these residents have set up practice in Clarington.

Other recruitment strategies have been employed. In 2018, local physicians applied for, and received, the designation of Clarington as a high needs area in Ontario for physicians. This provided a competitive advantage for recruitment. While this designation did help, it has been insufficient to meet the recruitment needs of this growing community. In addition, a new provincial agreement has resulted in this designation being sunset this year.

To keep up with the growth and competition across the province, Clarington must look to a proactive and achievable approach to ensure our community is appropriately resourced for the health of our community and economy.

With the anticipated growth, and our current complement of family physicians having full patient rosters, Clarington finds itself with an increasing population with no local family physician. In fact, 60% of the 100,000 visits to urgent care clinics in Clarington are from patients without a local family physician. This number has grown from approximately 43% of visits in 2018.

At the same time, there is a growing shortage of family physicians in Ontario and across Canada. Recruitment across Ontario will continue to be quite competitive for the next several years at a minimum. It is time for the community to collaborate and address a process to mitigate against this growing shortage of primary healthcare providers.

Clarington has experience and passion. Our proven success and history of the previous program can be revived, respecting that the world has changed since 2007. We need to update our processes and community offering to match that of our competitors, but most importantly to meet the needs of our prospective professionals and their families. This planning is currently underway through a dedicated working group.

As conversations evolve in the community to address the current and upcoming shortages for Family Physicians we wanted to reach out and include the Municipality in these discussions.

On behalf of the partners working on this initiative, we request that Clarington consider earmarking up to \$500,000.00 over a 5-year period from the Economic Development Reserve Fund. The partners will present an action plan before any funds are released and committed to recruiting new family physicians to the Clarington community.

Sincerely,



Angelo D'Amico, President/Chair
Clarington Board of Trade



Sheila Hall, Executive Director
Clarington Board of Trade

January 13, 2023