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Sent: Monday, July 24, 2023 8:48 AM
To: Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>
Cc: Trosow, Sam <strosow@london.ca>; Andrea Clinic
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Physician Recruitment and Retention Program

Good morning,

I was disappointed to hear that the community and protective services committee denied the request for funding for a project to help recruit and retain primary care providers in our area. As we all know, the lack of primary care is an issue facing not just London Middlesex but the entire province and country. This project was proposed as one aspect of a multi-faceted approach to help in this matter and as part of the Middlesex London Ontario Health Team's overall work to improve access to primary care. This includes work to reduce administrative burden for physicians as well as help to ensure access to larger team-based care to decrease the overall workload.

The recruitment and retention program is another aspect that was felt to be incredibly important to make London more competitive to physicians looking to start practices and to help those already practicing here stay. We know other communities have similar programs (Hamilton, Kitchener, Cambridge) and while there will always be some competition between communities for such a limited resource – this is not an attempt to poach physicians from other areas. No money will be going directly to physicians – rather the funds will help create an office to help support existing physicians and to help those looking to work here navigate the many complexities involved:

- Understanding the different models of primary in Ontario that is unique and very complicated in comparison to other provinces.
- Helping connect interested physicians with various clinics, landlords, and builders to help see the potential opportunities here (having one place to contact rather than having to reach out and search these sites on their own is of huge benefit)
- Helping to show the benefits of living in London and options in regards to neighbourhoods, schools, etc.
- Helping connecting spouses with job opportunities for themselves as well

This recruitment and retention program is of potential benefit for all Londoners. Businesses ask what the primary care situation is in London as part of their decision-making process of setting up here – because access to a family physician is part of what makes a city livable and attractive to businesses and workers. Having one co-ordinated program for interested physicians to contact and connect with helps London be attractive to those who may not have considered us before, to help retain those residents that are training here already (and of which we do a poor job of keeping right now), and to help support those physicians who are already here to ensure they can practice to their full scope for long time to come.

I hope that Council can see the benefit this program can have for all of London and Middlesex. One full-time physician can directly help the health of 1200-1500 people here. That is worth investing some money in.

Thank you for your time.

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