

# Primary Care Recruitment Program Year-In-Review, 2024

## Recruitment

- 6 doctors added to clinics
- 15 engaged candidates likely to be placed in the next 6 months
- Access to 790 candidates through SOPRA data base
- Connections with medicine students, family residents, working doctors around the world

## Onboarding

- Helped new docs get patients & advertised their practice starts
- Connected new docs with systems and services needed to open new practice
- Helped new clinic owners with HR, IT, and other admin tasks
- Worked with MLOHT practice facilitation team to provide onboarding information

## Retention

- Worked closely with Middlesex London Primary Care Network (MLPCN) to identify and reduce operational issues for family docs
- 3 most notable changes: improved communication, supply procurement system, system-efficiency tools (ex: AI scribe, Medical Office Assistant courses)

## Activities engaged in to support the above:

- Provided wrap-around services for incoming doctors: airport pickups, house rentals/supplies, vehicle arrangements, assisting with finding jobs for partners and schools for the children
- Conducted city tours
- Have been available daytime, evening, and weekends for communication with interested doctors
- Helped with the building permit process for renovations in two clinics
- Built on-going relationships with the program funding partners to include their ideas and listen to their needs (to help ensure funding for the future)
- Gathered data about family doctors, patients, and "attachment" in our region and communicate that to partners/the public

## Other necessary recruitment activities:

### Professional Organizations: [opra.ca](http://opra.ca), [so-pra.ca](http://so-pra.ca)

- On the team developing both the regional and provincial physician recruitment alliances
- Goal is to advocate for provincial primary care overhaul, share resources and ideas, work together to collect leads, and run recruitment events

### Incentive Funding

- Incentive funding is working in other communities to bring in doctors (Niagara recruited 28 this year -- \$100,000 relocation allowance is provided).
- I have been meeting with the Chamber of Commerce, City Councilors, and community leaders to pitch for such funds.
- None acquired to date.

### Travel

- Traveling to recruitment events does more than generate leads.
- I have identified reasons Canadians training abroad are not coming back and am speaking with those who might be able to correct these issues.
- This requires meetings with Prov Gov Ministers, MPPs, medical schools, and influencers.

# Lessons Learned and Next Steps

The Ontario primary care delivery system is in a state of crisis and must be overhauled. The current provincial government has appointed Dr Jane Philpott as the Chair of Ontario's *Primary Care Action Team*. Her goal is to attach every resident of Ontario to a primary care practitioner (family doctor or nurse practitioner) in five years.

What does that mean for us?

We need to provide input to her team about what our region needs, ready people and places for adoption of the framework, and work with her to roll out her vision in Middlesex London.

We also need to:

- Address the family doctor operational pain points with the support of MLPCN and hospitals -- with goal of improving physician retention and potentially increasing roster sizes.
- Continue speaking with physicians not working in comprehensive care and see what could move them towards family practice since most don't want to be business owners. Find ways/groups/clinics that can make the practice set-up more appealing to incoming doctors.
- Continue strengthening bonds with local medical students & residents, particularly from Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.
- Work with the MLPCN to better communicate with providers -- help with retention, locum support (which can lead to physicians staying in London and setting up a practice here).

## Middlesex London's "Patient Enrolment" numbers:

According to Patient Enrollment Model (PEM) data (Oct, 2024), the percentage of people not enrolled to a family doctor in Middlesex London area is around 25% of the population. Sixty-one doctors are likely to retire in the next one to five years and those doctors care for a total of approximately 85,000 patients. Of note, the London population rose by seven percent in the last three years.

## Summary:

The need for new family physicians is so large that we need to work with everyone -- provincial & regional recruiters, Dr Jane Philpott's team, the OHTs, our PCN, and community partners to address this crisis.

It is imperative that this role be continued to ensure someone is there to answer the phone, support the hundreds of people who are asking for help, and not make it hard for family doctors to come to London.



Andrea Loewen  
Primary Care Recruitment, Onboarding, Retention Lead  
Andrea.Loewen@mloht.ca | 226-688-9054