

April 12, 2024

Warden Chris Peabody and Bruce County Council  
30 Park St. P.O.Box 70  
Walkerton, ON. N0G2V0

**Re: Grey Bruce/Owen Sound Physician Recruitment Taskforce Report**

Dear Warden Peabody and Bruce County Council:

On behalf of the Grey Bruce/Owen Sound Physician Recruitment and Retention Taskforce, I am pleased to provide the attached report and recommendations, along with an Executive Summary, for your urgent consideration and support.

In 2022, the Grey Bruce/Owen Sound Physician Recruitment and Retention Taskforce made up of primary care providers, local physician recruiters, representatives from local healthcare services and hospitals, Grey Bruce OHT, HealthForceOntario, major employers and volunteers in the communities, emerged to address unmet needs for primary care in our communities, specifically recruitment of primary care doctors.

In 2023, the Taskforce hired an experienced physician recruitment consultant to undertake a stakeholder survey and consultations and a communications and social marketing consultant, both of whom contributed to the Grey Bruce/Owen Sound Physician Recruitment and Retention Taskforce Report. Funding for the consultants and the report, as well as for a [Regional Physician Recognition Day](#) hosted in June 2023, was provided through volunteer donations provided by the Owen Sound Physician Recruitment Fund.

**The Taskforce Report makes a clear case for establishing a new regional, physician recruitment program.**

Because Grey Bruce/Owen Sound has a lengthy history of struggling with an ongoing shortage of physicians, this is not the first-time stakeholders have recommended a regional program.

In April 2019, the South West LHIN and HealthForceOntario hosted a Forum in Owen Sound to support rural recruitment to meet the needs of the region. However, implementing those recommendations for a regional recruitment effort stalled.

Today, with an estimated 30,000+ persons without a primary care provider in Grey Bruce/Owen Sound, we cannot continue with the current investment approach which fails to meet recruitment targets.

Family doctor shortages create stress for patients, communities, and physicians, and as outlined in the report, it is anticipated that the shortage of care will get worse before it gets better in terms of supply and demand.

As a next step to implement the Taskforce recommendations, on Wed. May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, the Grey Bruce/Owen Sound Physician Recruitment and Retention Taskforce are hosting a meeting, facilitated by Georgian College, Community Impact Lab Network, Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for potential funders and supporters. The purpose of the meeting is to develop a sustainable, stand-alone not-for-profit entity that supports physician recruiting in the region and can solicit community investment. Christine MacDonald, CAO at Bruce County, has provided valuable direction to the Taskforce and has received an invitation to attend the meeting.

We urge Bruce County Council to support the recommendations of this Taskforce and the 2019 Forum to fund and implement a new regional, physician recruitment program.

We look forward to joining representatives of Grey and Bruce counties, and all stakeholders on May 1<sup>st</sup> to advance the need for timely access to primary care across the region.

Sincerely,

Pat Kelly

On behalf of the Grey Bruce/Owen Sound Physician Recruitment and Retention Taskforce