

Primary Care Expansion and Community Impact:

Recruiting and Retaining Family Physicians in Ontario Communities

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Why Family Medicine Matters to Communities



The Foundation of Healthy Communities

Family physicians are the primary source of ongoing care for most Canadians who have access to a regular care provider.



Supporting Residents at Every Stage of Life

Family physicians provide care across the lifespan, helping children, adults, and older adults stay healthy and connected to care in their community.



Healthier People, Stronger Communities

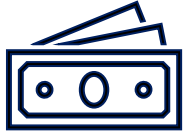
Access to family medicine is associated with better health outcomes and fewer avoidable hospital and emergency department visits.



Trusted Relationships Close to Home

Long-term relationships with a family physician help people access coordinated care and navigate the health system when they need support.

The Economic Value of Family Medicine



Drives Local Prosperity

Family physicians generate local economic activity, support jobs and services, and contribute to community growth. In rural Ontario, one physician contributes an estimated \$285K annually to GDP and supports 3.2 full-time jobs.



Reduces Health System Strain

Strong access to family medicine helps prevent avoidable health care costs through earlier intervention, continuity of care, and reduced reliance on hospitals and emergency departments.



Supports Healthy and Productive Communities

Family physicians help people stay healthy, manage chronic conditions, and remain active in their workplaces, families, and communities.



Attracts and Retains Families and New Businesses

A stable family physician workforce is an important part of what makes communities attractive places to live, work, and raise a family. It is also a vital anchor for attracting new businesses.

Family Medicine Trends in Ontario



“ More doctors than ever before are choosing to practise family medicine in Ontario, and this year saw a record-setting number of 621 medical students match into the specialty.

”

- Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health

Family Medicine Trends in Ontario



Despite increasing numbers of family medicine graduates, fewer are choosing to establish comprehensive, longitudinal family practices.



6,300+

Family physicians added in Ontario, 1993-2021



40%

Chose focused areas of practice



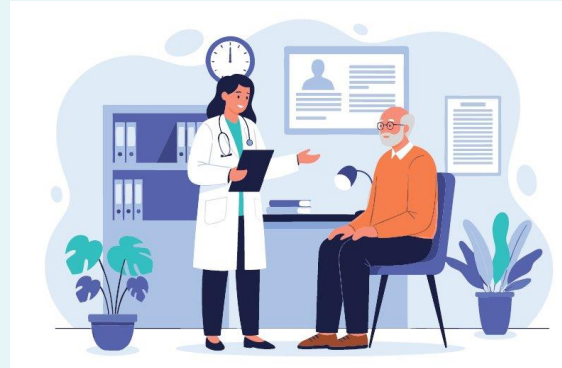
Evidence shows a growing shift within family medicine toward focused practice areas and away from longitudinal family medicine.

Key Issues Facing Family Physicians Today



Inefficiency Burden

Too much time spent on admin tasks that could instead be spent with patients.



Lack of Team-based Care

Patients have increasingly complex medical and social needs that require more time and support.



Financial Stability

Rising overhead costs are making it more difficult to run a comprehensive family practice.

Key Issues Facing Family Physicians Today



Rural and Remote Realities

Rural and remote communities often face unique recruitment and retention challenges shaped by geography, workforce availability, and distance from services.



Team-Based Care Needs the Team Members

HHR shortages impact communities across our province, including the interdisciplinary healthcare professionals that enable team functioning.



Limited Access to Specialist Referrals

A lack of specialists means more time coordinating care paths and increased wait times for patients.



We're seeing progress:

- ✓ More interprofessional teams
- ✓ New/expanded teaching units
- ✓ Digital health integration plans for medical records and referrals
- ✓ Expanded Learn and Stay grant
- ✓ Provincial AI Scribes program
- ✓ Streamlined licensing for internationally trained physicians
- ✓ Increasing attachment to primary care for more Ontarians

Solutions The OCFP Would Like To See



Ensuring More Ontarians Have Access to a Family Doctor

**Technology:
Smarter, More
Efficient
Workflows**

**Infrastructure:
Building Better,
Connected Care**

**Workforce:
Making Family
Medicine More
Attractive**

**Teams: Meeting
the Needs of
Patients and
Family
Physicians**

Reducing Inefficiencies in the System



We need equitable, sustainable solutions that strengthen family medicine across Ontario.

- **Improve coordination across the system** for a more connected patient experience.
- **Strengthen team-based care** to meet growing community needs.
- **Reduce administrative burden** through streamlined referrals, requisitions, forms.
- **Support sustainable practice models** that enable family physicians to establish, maintain, and grow practices in their communities.



The Importance of Primary Care Teams



Done right, team-based care can **increase family physician capacity, improve patient outcomes, enhance joy in practice**, and help reach the government's goal of attaching more patients.

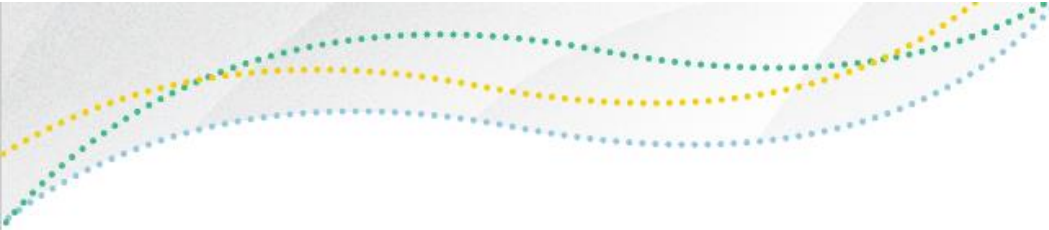
Critical Success Factor:

Teams are optimized to support the MRP in **care delivery AND boosting attachment.**



Family physicians are more likely to participate in team-based care when **care is delivered through integrated teams** and **team members are embedded into day-to-day clinical workflows.**

- OCFP Survey, 2025



2026

Pre-Budget Submission

Partnering to Protect Ontario's
Communities



Municipalities know their communities and their residents. They can be partners in successful implementation of major government priorities like the Primary Care Action Plan. However, as the [Auditor General](#) concluded, creating a system where individual municipalities compete with one another with cash incentives for physicians doesn't support equitable, province-wide access to quality health care.

Municipalities are Part of the Solution



Help identifying suitable space for FPs and learners



Clear onboarding supports for physicians and their families



Connections to local physician peers and mentors



Essential regional planning partner



Thank You!

www.ontariofamilyphysicians.ca

World Family Doctor Day

