



August 8, 2024

His Worship Justin Towndale
Mayor of the City of Cornwall
PO Box 877
Cornwall, Ontario
K6H 5T9

Dear Mr. Mayor:

Re: Mayor's Task Force on Medical Recruitment

Further to your letter of July 26th, 2024, we thank you for this opportunity to respond to your questions regarding medical recruitment and retention. As requested, our responses are noted below.

What strategies would work to recruit and retain medical professionals?

- The most consistent feedback we receive from candidates is that they are looking for “turnkey” options. Candidates would like to move into office/clinic space that is established and operational.
- The current market for medical professionals is competitive, many communities are providing significant financial incentives, including debt repayment, moving expenses and signing bonuses.

What healthcare gaps currently exist in our region?

- The hospital is currently actively recruiting for the following specialists: Psychiatrists, Pediatricians and Anesthetists as well as General Practitioners and Internal Medicine specialists for community.
- Other healthcare professionals that are challenging to recruit are diagnostic imaging technicians and technologists. Shortages in these areas impact the hospital's ability to provide timely access to services like MRI, CT and ultrasound.

...2

What is the highest area of risk for healthcare in our region?

- The highest areas of risk for healthcare in our region are related to our primary care, anesthesia and psychiatric shortages.
 - Primary care shortages impact the overall health of our community, leading to further burden on medical specialists and hospital resources. In the longer term, these gaps can/will impact economic development and the retention of other professionals.
 - Anesthesia coverage is critical for a hospital providing the services currently offered at Cornwall Community Hospital (CCH). A shortage of anesthesia professionals will lead to reduced surgical volume and without 24/7 anesthesia call coverage the impact on the emergency department, trauma care and obstetrics is devastating. There is a spiraling impact where the retention of other specialists can be severely impacted.
 - Our community, like many, has experienced an increased need for mental health services, at a time when access to psychiatrists is very limited. While we have had some success in this area, we continue to struggle with appropriate coverage. We have explored various models of care and continue to work with our regional partners in Ottawa to ensure sustainable services going forward.

Does your organization play a role in healthcare recruitment in our region? If so, please explain.

- CCH has active recruitment practices for all healthcare professionals utilized within the hospital, including physicians.
- We work with Health Force Ontario and the Department of Economic Development on physician recruitment, these partnerships have been successful in the past.

Should there be a lead agency for healthcare recruitment in our region? If so, please identify what agency.

- Given the complexity of hospital credentialing obligations under the *Public Hospitals Act*, and the uniqueness of hospital operations, it is necessary for the hospital to remain responsible for the recruitment of specialists with hospital privileges.
- With varying needs across the healthcare environment, it would be difficult to identify a single lead agency. What is important is for all of us to continue to work together and support our various initiatives. For example, the Department of Economic Development has been a key player in many of our recruitment efforts by attending medical recruitment fairs; while the hospital can address hospital resources and facilities, the city representatives speak to the benefits/opportunities of our community as a place to live and work.

His Worship Justin Towndale

Page 3

August 8, 2024

Other recommendations.

- The competition for medical professionals today is fierce, and understanding how incentives align or will be received is critical. We should also consider how incentives might impact existing providers and models. It will be important to engage with the field to gain insight into the elements of a successful incentive model and to understand the various provincial medical models. We would be pleased to make available a representative responsible for medical recruitment e.g. Vice-President of Medical Affairs as a resource to the Task Force.

We trust that this information will be helpful, and we thank you for identifying health care recruitment as a priority.

Please contact us at any time for further information, we would be pleased to support you in these efforts.

Yours sincerely,



Jeanette Despatie

President and Chief Executive Officer