



Representing the Districts of Kenora, Rainy River and Thunder Bay
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Resolution 2024-10: Emergency Room Closures

Background:

There have been an unprecedented number of Emergency Room closures in the region due to a lack of Medical Professionals able to operate the departments safely. On March 26, 2022, the Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital closed the Emergency Room for 24 hours after exhausting all possible options for staffing the facility. This was the first closure in 30 years. During that time, people requiring care were redirected to the Dryden Regional Health Centre (200+ km away). The medical system in Northern Ontario is in a crisis. Despite increases in student spaces at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, incentives for locums to work in Northern Ontario, updates to the compensation for rural northern physicians, and programs for nurses including the Grow Your Own Nurse Practitioner Initiative, Community Commitment Program for Nursing and the Bridging the Education Grant in Nursing, the District of Kenora is still struggling to recruit and retain medical professionals.

Recommendation:

WHEREAS the medical system in Northern Ontario is in a crisis due to a lack of qualified Medical Professionals; and

NOW THEREFORE MAY IT BE RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association lobby the Government of Ontario to address Emergency Room closures caused by shortages of doctors, nurses, and medical professionals at a regional level.

Moved By: Lisa Teeple, Councillor of Emo

Seconded By: Alex Crane, Councillor of O'Connor

CARRIED

President