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Resolution 2024-13: Doctor Recruitment & Retention

Background:

WHEREAS many communities in Northwestern Ontario are struggling to find family physicians and retain the ones they have; and

WHEREAS current and newly recruited family physicians are finding the workload excessive and are challenged to find a sustainable work/life balance; and

WHEREAS many communities are falling short of providing the necessary incentives to recruit and retain physicians; and

WHEREAS the physician shortage, and an increase in unroasted patients, results in hospital emergency rooms often ending up being a primary care clinic even though they are not designed nor staffed for primary care; and

WHEREAS securing locum support is an ongoing pursuit to continue to support local physicians; and

WHEREAS many communities cannot continue to provide the ongoing stipend and honorarium costs for visiting locums to provide ER, anesthesia, and general surgery services; and

WHEREAS existing incentive programs are slowly being reduced, with some consideration being given to eliminate these funding programs totally.

Recommendation:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association calls on the Ministry of Health to:

1. Ensure stable and predictable funding is maintained and enhanced under such programs as Income Stabilization, the Northern Rural Recruitment and Retention Initiative, the Northern Specialist Locum Program, the Emergency Department Locum Program, and the Summer Locum Funding Program; and the reimbursements be equivalent to the physician costs for hotel, travel, car rental, and stipend reflective of a missed day of work; and
2. Funding conditions of physicians be reviewed to ensure these conditions are more representative of an underserved health care system in a small community setting in Northwestern Ontario; and
3. Designate rural family physicians as specialists and have their remuneration be reflective of that as an added incentive for physicians to relocate to rural areas; and

4. Expand essential locum stipends and travel honorariums to recognize the true costs and time commitments for travel to and from communities.

Moved By: Lisa Teeple, Councillor of Emo

Seconded By: Alex Crane, Councillor of O'Connor

CARRIED



President