



Community Services

Prepared for: Council-in-Committee

Report: CAO-01-01-2024

Meeting Date: February 12, 2024

File: 120303

1. Title

Revised Physician Recruitment, Retention and Medical Education Financial Incentive Policy

2. Recommendations

That: Council approves revised Physician Recruitment, Retention and Medical Education Financial Incentive Policy attached as Appendix 1, and further

That: Council receives Report CAO-01-2024, attached as Appendix 2, for information purposes, and further

That: Council directs staff to submit the necessary By-law.

3. Relation to Council's Corporate Strategic Plan

Priority: Sustainable and reliable access to local health care

Initiative: Update the Physician Recruitment and Attraction Program to address challenges and health system changes.

4. List of Stakeholders

Fort Erie Medical Community

Fort Erie Community Health Care Services Committee

5. Purpose of Report

This report proposes some recommended changes, for Council consideration and approval, to the Physician Recruitment, Retention and Medical Education Policy based on feedback received from local physicians, health service providers, discussions with the Community Health Care Services Committee and Council feedback received on Report CAO-01-2024.

6. Analysis

It is important to have a physician recruitment, retention and medical education financial incentive guideline that aligns with Council's objectives and outlines appropriate incentives to support this program. Recruiting family physicians in today's market remains very competitive, as there are not enough family medicine residents graduating to meet the demands of available

positions. Retirement of physicians with large fee for service practices, physicians wanting better work/life balance, and practice interests outside of family medicine all play a role in the current recruitment challenges.

Over the past few years, the Town of Fort Erie has been successful with new physician recruitment, but continued population growth and physician retirements will continue to present challenges with un-rostered (unattached) residents in the Town. Succession plans still need to be established for upcoming retirements to transition rostered clients and efforts to recruit new family physicians to care for un-rostered residents in the community needs to continue.

A competitive analysis was performed comparing our incentives to other municipalities within the Niagara Region. Based on our recent success in recruitment, and our intent to remain competitive, it is being recommended that the current incentive be set at a maximum amount of \$75,000 and separate funding for equipment be set at a lifetime maximum of \$25,000. Clinic space in the Town of Fort Erie is in short supply, so there will be a need for clinics to expand to meet the growing needs. The proposed changes for equipment funding stipulates in the Policy that all equipment purchased must be new and must remain within the Town of Fort Erie should the physician leave for any reason and that all equipment requests would be vetted through the Community Health Care Services Committee prior to approval.

A program for REACH Niagara was also added for budget consideration and recently approved. This mobile health clinic provides services in the Jarvis Street area to Fort Erie residents and many are newcomers and refugees, homeless or impacted by mental health and addictions. REACH Niagara's plan is to expand into the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre and Crystal Beach area, making their healthcare services more accessible. The Town of Fort Erie will advocate with the Ministry of Health for sustainable funding for this program as part of its government relations strategy.

All other programs within the Policy remain unchanged. These changes to the Policy were discussed at the Community Health Care Services Committee meeting on September 19, 2023 and were agreed to by all members in attendance.

7. Financial, Staffing and Accessibility (AODA) Implications

No staffing implications.

8. Policies Affecting Proposal

By-law 123-2019 adopted the Physician Recruitment, Retention and Medical Education Financial Incentive Guideline; if Council approves the recommendations in this Report, council will need to repeal this By-law.

9. Comments from Departments, Community and Corporate Partners

Not applicable.

10. Alternatives

Council could decide not to approve the revised Policy or propose further revisions.

11. Communicating Results

Upon adoption by Council, staff will share the Policy with the local healthcare community.

12. Conclusion

The approval of this proposed Policy will help fulfill the goals for enhanced health services planning by this Council.

13. Report Approval

Prepared by:
Alice Preston, BBA
Community Health Care Services Coordinator

Approved by:
Chris McQueen, MBA
Chief Administrative Officer

14. Attachments

Appendix 1 – Revised Physician Recruitment, Retention and Medical Education Financial Incentive Policy
Appendix 2 – Report CAO-01-2024