

## Request for Decision

### Primary Care Recruitment Program Update

Presented To: Community Services Committee

Presented: Monday, Jul 11, 2016

Report Date: Friday, Jun 24, 2016

Type: Managers' Reports

### Resolution

Recommendation One: THAT the City of Greater Sudbury accepts the report dated June 24, 2016 from the Chief Administrative Officer on the Primary Healthcare Provider Recruitment and Retention Program Update.

Recommendation Two: THAT the City of Greater Sudbury accepts Option \_\_\_\_\_ as the 2017 direction in regards to Primary Care Physician Recruitment:

Option 1: That staff be directed to prepare a business case option for one time funding in the amount of \$150,000 for consideration during the 2017 Budget Process;

Option 2: That staff be directed to end the financial incentives component of the Primary Healthcare Provider Recruitment and Retention Program.

#### Signed By

##### **Report Prepared By**

Ryan Humeniuk  
Physician Recruitment Coordinator  
*Digitally Signed Jun 24, 16*

##### **Division Review**

Ian Wood  
Director of Economic Development  
*Digitally Signed Jun 24, 16*

##### **Recommended by the C.A.O.**

Ed Archer  
Chief Administrative Officer  
*Digitally Signed Jun 27, 16*

### Finance Implications

If Option 1 is approved, a business case option will be developed for consideration for the 2017 budget process.

### HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Primary Healthcare Provider Recruitment and Retention Program continues to address longstanding shortages of primary healthcare providers within the City of Greater Sudbury and is intended to enhance recruitment efforts locally. Staff continue to monitor primary healthcare service levels by analyzing demographics of current providers in comparison to the number of citizens looking for providers.

### BACKGROUND

From 2008 to 2015, funding for Primary Healthcare Provider incentives has been provided through one-time funding commitments from City Council. Each year, a one-time funding request had been proposed based on the projections for the upcoming year.

In 2016, funding for the incentives component was provided entirely by funds collected from previously returned incentive payments. In 2015, four future family physicians decided to repay return of service incentives to the City of Greater Sudbury due to various reasons including one of the physicians setting up practice in another community while the other three are practicing in Greater Sudbury however not in family medicine. These four physicians had been recruited through the previous Strategic Physician Recruitment and Retention Program which offered a higher level of incentives. Since the current Primary Healthcare Provider Recruitment and Retention Program provides a lower level of incentives to recruits, a total of 8 new physicians could be recruited with the funding collected.

## **Program Success**

The previous Strategic Physician Recruitment and Retention Program and the current Primary Healthcare Provider Recruitment and Retention Program have been quite successful since City Council approved the initiative in 2007.

- To date, 72 future family physicians and two nurse practitioners have been recruited.
- The 72 family physicians represent 63% of Greater Sudbury's designated complement of 115 family doctors and will provide access to primary health care to an estimated 100,000 citizens of Greater Sudbury – over half of the population.
- By the end of 2016, 58 of these family physicians have begun practicing, with the remaining 14 scheduled to begin practice over the next two years.
- Greater Sudbury's approach was recognized with the 2008 Economic Developers Council of Ontario Award for Product Development – Physician Recruitment.

## **Components of Program**

The program is comprised of two main components:

1. **Ongoing Support:** Year-round staff support network to assist medical students/medical residents and physicians who are new to Greater Sudbury. Assistance is provided to support targeted groups in finding suitable accommodations, employment opportunities for spouses and schools/activities for their children. In addition, the network hosts events at various venues located across the city. The support network is funded through the Physician Recruitment annual base budget, which has an allocation of \$36,356 in 2016.
2. **Financial Incentives:** These are to encourage family physicians and nurse practitioners to practice in Greater Sudbury. The incentives have been funded each year through one-time funding commitments from City Council. These incentives include the following:
  - **City of Greater Sudbury Medical Student Bursary** - \$20,000 per student (two year return of service) who commits to practice family medicine within the City of Greater Sudbury upon successful completion of residency training.
  - **Family Medicine Resident Return of Service Incentive** - \$20,000 per Family Medicine Resident (two year return of service) who commits to practice family medicine within the City of Greater Sudbury upon successful completion of residency training.
  - **Return of Service in Outlying Communities** - \$15,000 per Family Physician who commits to practice in any of the outlying communities.
  - **City of Lakes Family Health Team Incentive** - \$10,000 per Family Physician who agrees to join the City of Lakes Family Health Team.

- **Nurse Practitioner Incentive** - \$4,000 per Nurse Practitioner who agrees to a minimum of four years return of service within a Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic.
  - Provides service in a clinic located within the City of Greater Sudbury but outside the former City of Sudbury.
  - Has not worked as a Nurse Practitioner in any other capacity in Greater Sudbury within the last four years.

The most popular incentives have been the City of Greater Sudbury Medical Student Bursary and the Family Medicine Resident Return of Service Incentive. These incentives alone have enticed 65 of the 72 current family physician recruits. At this time staff are not aware of any community in the North that does not offer incentives of any kind.

The strategy has remained effective due to the complementary support and resources provided by staff, as well as the promotion of the general advantages associated with living in the City of Greater Sudbury. This indicates that the ongoing relationship built between the City and potential physicians may be as important as the incentives themselves.

Even as new health care providers begin practicing, three to four family physicians close their practices each year, primarily due to retirement. In 2007, City Council reviewed the results of a then-recent survey which indicated that 18 physicians were set to retire over the next few years. Over the last nine years this predicted trend has been realized. Despite this natural attrition, our community has enjoyed a net gain of family physicians practicing in Greater Sudbury.

At present, 47% of our family physician population – in fact the largest segment of this group is relatively young, with less than 10 years in practice. By contrast, the same statistics indicate that 24% or 29 family physicians have over 30 years in practice. These statistics make it safe to assume that many of the physicians within this segment will be announcing retirements in the near future, therefore, it can be argued that there is still a need for active recruitment despite recent recruitment successes.

To help to ensure continuity of care for our citizens, staff continue to work closely with retiring family physicians, trying to connect them with new family medicine recruits. By doing this, staff are hopeful that new family physicians will take over existing practices to avoid those current patients becoming “orphaned” and left without a primary health care provider.

### **Current Status**

- At end of 2016, it is forecasted that 119 family physicians will be practicing in Greater Sudbury.
- Our community has been designated for a complement of 115 family physicians by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.
- As noted above, there are 14 family physicians currently set to begin practice in the community within the next two years.
- It is estimated that there will be a loss of approximately three to four family physicians per year due to attrition (e.g. retirement).

It is important to note that family physicians who are retiring have patient rosters averaging 2,500+ patients while those starting practice are rostering between 1,000-1,500 patients. There are several reasons for this trend, including that new physicians are easing into practice while working within their comfort levels in addition to combining their family practice along with other work such as palliative care, OB or providing services within long term care facilities.

Based on these estimates, considering the gain of 14 doctors along with the loss of established practices due to attrition, if further physician recruitment efforts were to cease, the community could expect to have

109 family physicians servicing patients by 2022, essentially 10 less family physicians than currently practicing.

At this time staff continue to work with prospective recruits who are inquiring about incentives offered by the City of Greater Sudbury however are unable to finalize return of service agreements due to not having sufficient funds remaining in the 2016 incentive budget. In light of recent developments in Chelmsford, the funds remaining in the 2016 incentive budget have been designated to provide incentives to new physicians beginning practice at either the City of Lakes Family Health Team or the Northeast Family Medicine Centre.

An investment of \$150,000 in 2017 could help to secure an additional 5 family physicians over and above the 14 already committed and will provide incentives to attract family physicians to join the City of Lakes Family Health Team Chelmsford location to fill remaining vacancies, in addition to attracting family physicians to the outlying communities.

This fund could also provide funding to assist the Nurse Practitioner Led Clinics with their recruitment efforts to attract nurse practitioners by providing incentives to new recruits.

### **Request for Direction from Council**

**Staff are presenting the following two options for Council's consideration:**

#### **Option 1: \$150,000 One-time funding request**

Would allow the following scenario:

- Recruit 5 new future family physicians (Cost: \$100,000)
- Provide FHT incentives to four new family physicians (Cost: \$40,000)
- Provide Nurse Practitioner Incentives to two newly recruited NP's working within NP-led clinics in an outlying community (Cost: \$8,000)
- Provide the Community Ambassadors Medical Student Bursary to two Sudbury-born medical students studying at any of the five medical schools in Ontario other than NOSM (cost \$2,000)

This option is intended to assist recruitment efforts to keep up with the projected rate of attrition and allow Greater Sudbury to maintain a full complement family physicians.

#### **Option 2: Continue recruitment efforts without the use of Financial Incentives**

Staff will rely entirely on the Ongoing Support component of the program and will continue marketing practice opportunities located within Greater Sudbury.

The following incentives would no longer be available:

- City of Greater Sudbury Medical Student Bursary
- Family Medicine Resident Return of Service Incentive
- Return of Service in Outlying Communities
- City of Lakes Family Health Team Incentive
- Nurse Practitioner Incentive

Without Return of Service Agreements, it will be difficult to estimate the success of this option for several years. Staff will monitor the situation to the greatest extent possible and bring back information to Council as required.