

## Request for Decision

### Physician Recruitment Program Results to Date and Future Strategy

Presented To:	Policy Committee
Presented:	Wednesday, Aug 10, 2011
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Type:	Presentations

### Recommendation

That the Council of the City of Greater Sudbury accepts the staff report of July 26, 2011 on the Strategic Physician Recruitment Program and directs staff to prepare an option for consideration of one time funding of \$400,000 during the 2012 Budget Process based on Option 3 identified in the report.

Further that Council direct staff to incorporate an incentive for Nurse Practitioners into the existing program and funded by the Physician Recruitment Budget, all in accordance with the staff recommendation.

Finally, in the event that Council reduces funding for Physician Recruitment in 2012 below the level of the previous year, that the Specialist Recruitment Incentive be reduced from \$5,000 to \$2,500.

### Finance Implications

A budget option will be developed for Finance Committee for the 2012 budget deliberations based on the Physician Recruitment Program option approved by Policy Committee.

#### Signed By

**Report Prepared By**

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*Digitally Signed Jul 29, 11*

**Division Review**

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**Recommended by the Department**

Bill Lautenbach  
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**Recommended by the C.A.O.**

Doug Nadorozny  
Chief Administrative Officer  
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### Program Success

The Strategic Physician Recruitment and Retention Program has enjoyed significant success since City Council initially approved it in 2008.

- Recruited 35 future family physicians and provided incentives to 31 specialists recruited by the Sudbury Regional Hospital.
- The 35 family physicians represent 30% of our designated complement and will provide access to primary health care to an estimated 48,000 citizens of Greater Sudbury.
- To date we have had 18 of these family physicians open practices, with the remaining 17 scheduled to begin practice over the next two years.
- 2008 Economic Developers Council of Ontario Award for Product Development - Physician Recruitment.

## Components of Program

The program is comprised of two main components.

1. A year-round support network to assist medical students/medical residents and physicians who are new to Greater Sudbury. Assistance is provided to assist targeted groups in finding suitable accommodations, employment opportunities for spouses, 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. (Budget of \$80,356 in 2011)
2. Financial incentives to encourage physician's (particularly family physicians) to practice in Greater Sudbury. The incentives are funded through one-time funding commitments from City Council. These incentives include the following:
  - City of Greater Sudbury Medical Student Bursary - \$20,000 (two year return of service)
    - Note: Once in residency training, past recipients of the City of Greater Sudbury Medical Student Bursary have the option of extending their return of service for an additional 2 years which qualifies them for an additional \$20,000 incentive, therefore a total of \$40,000 for a four year return of service.
  - Family Medicine Resident Return of Service Incentive - \$40,000 (four year return of service)
  - Return of Service in Outlying Communities - \$15,000
  - City of Lakes Family Health Team Incentive - \$10,000
  - Hospital Privileges Incentive - \$5,000
  - Specialist Incentive - \$5,000
    - This \$5000 incentive from the City of Greater Sudbury is in addition to the \$2500 specialist incentive offered by the Sudbury Regional Hospital to newly recruited specialists. This incentive is difficult for us to forecast annually as it depends entirely on how many specialists are recruited by the hospital within the budget year. So far our estimate for 2011 is \$75,000.

To date, our 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 allowed us to entice and sign 30 of our 35 current family physician recruits. It is also important to note that our financial incentives are much lower when compared to what many other Northern communities offer; but are proving to be quite effective when combined with our support network initiatives.

Even with the great success of our recruitment program, each year we are seeing approx 3-4 family physicians close their practices, primarily due to retirement. In 2007, City Council reviewed the results of a then recent physician survey which indicated that 18 physicians were set to retire over the next 4 years. Over the last four years we have seen this trend occur but the success of the recruitment program has ensured that we have enjoyed a net gain of family physicians practicing in Greater Sudbury. At present, 40% of our family physician population, in fact the largest segment of that population, are relatively young, with less than 10 years in practice. Over the past four years, our recruitment program has worked with three-quarters of these younger physicians.

By contrast, the same statistics indicate that 23% or 25 of our community's family physicians have 30+ years in practice. It is a safe assumption that in the near future many of the physicians within this segment will be announcing retirements. Thus, even though we are approaching our full complement of 115 family physicians; our work in recruitment is certainly not over.

To ensure continuity of care for our citizens, it is important to work closely with retiring family physicians and connect them with new family medicine recruits. By doing this, we are hopeful that the new family physicians

will take over an existing practice so we are able to avoid those current patients becoming orphaned.

## **Future Outlook**

Since the start of the Strategic Physician Recruitment and Retention Program in 2008, funding for our incentive budget has been provided through one-time funding commitments from City Council. Each year we submit a one-time funding request based on our projections for the upcoming year. Even though we are approaching our full complement, we recommend that Council take into account that we could be faced with a significant number of retirements in the near future.

As a result, staff are proposing three different funding options for Council's consideration for the 2012 Budget. The options are outlined below, along with some indication of how the fund might be used. Depending on the funding option decided upon, 2012 recruitment results could be either above or below the rate of attrition. Over the past three years we have recruited on average, 10 new family medicine recruits per year.

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

This option would enable us to:

- Recruit two new future family physicians.
- Provide the specialist incentive to 10 new specialists recruited by the Sudbury Regional Hospital.
- Provide 4 new family physicians with the hospital privileges incentive.

The results of this option are below our projected rate of attrition, resulting in a net decrease of family physicians by year end.

### **Option #2: \$270,000 One-time funding request**

This would enable us to:

- Recruit five new future family physicians.
- Provide the specialist incentive to 10 new specialists recruited by the Sudbury Regional Hospital.
- Provide 4 new family physicians with the hospital privileges incentive.

The results of this option will either match or slightly exceed our projected rate of attrition.

### **Option #3: \$400,000 One-time funding request**

This is the same level of funding as our 2011 Physician Recruitment Budget which would enable us to:

- Recruit 8 new future family physicians.
- Provide the specialist incentive to 10 new specialists recruited by the Sudbury Regional Hospital.
- Provide 6 new family physicians with the hospital privileges incentive.

The results of this option will exceed the projected rate of attrition, bringing us closer to our full complement of 115 family physicians.

## **Additional Considerations**

### **1. Financial Incentives to recruit Nurse Practitioners**

Since the development of our Strategic Physician Recruitment and Retention Program in 2007, several

Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic's have been created within our community. The Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic's provide our citizens with access to a primary health care provider, who otherwise would not have had one. Staff recommends that Nurse Practitioners be included in our current recruitment program and that a new Nurse Practitioner Incentive be created. Staff recommends an incentive in the amount of \$4,000 be provided to a newly recruited Nurse Practitioner that meets the following eligibility requirements:

- Agrees to a minimum of 4 years return of service within a Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic.
- Provide service in a clinic located with 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 4 years.

## **2. Specialist Incentives**

The City of Greater Sudbury currently offers an incentive in the amount of \$5,000 to newly recruited physician specialists recruited by the Sudbury Regional Hospital. This incentive is provided along with a \$2,500 from the Sudbury Regional Hospital for a total of \$7,500. This incentive is open ended and depends entirely on the recruitment activities/success at the Sudbury Regional Hospital. This makes it very difficult to predict the amount issued each year.

Since 2008, the cost to the CGS Physician Recruitment Program is as follows:

2008 - \$40,000

2009 - \$35,000

2010 - \$60,000

2011 - \$20,000 to date and the projected forecast is for a total of \$75,000

Staff recommends that if Council decides on either Funding Option 1 or 2 that they consider reducing the amount of the Specialist incentive from \$5,000 to an amount equal to that of the Sudbury Regional Hospital at \$2,500.

## **Summary and Recommendation**

In summary, the Strategic Physician Recruitment and Retention program has proven to be effective in recruiting family physicians to Greater Sudbury. Staff recommends that Council select Option 3 to maintain the program initiatives at a funding level equal to our 2011 budget. This will ensure that we are able to keep up with upcoming retirements and work towards our goal of reaching a full complement of family physicians so every citizen of Greater Sudbury has access to a primary health care provider.