



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 26, 2022
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Physician Recruitment and Retention Metrics for 2021-2022 (BOH22017) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

At its meeting on August 10, 2022, the Board of Health provided the following direction:

3. Physician Recruitment and Retention Steering Committee Report 22-002 - August 5, 2022 (Item 10.1)

- (e) That an information report be prepared respecting Recruitment numbers for the last two years with metrics, to next Board of Health meeting.

INFORMATION

The Physician Recruitment and Retention program is a partnership between the City of Hamilton, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and the Hamilton Academy of Medicine, which assists with the recruitment and retention of family physicians in Hamilton. The program is funded through the City of Hamilton and key healthcare stakeholders in Hamilton. Oversight of the program is provided by the Physician Recruitment & Retention Steering Committee, which reports to Council through the Board of Health.

On August 12, 2022 Hamilton's City Council approved the transfer of the Physician Recruitment and Retention program to the Greater Hamilton Health Network (GHHN), to

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

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be completed by February 28, 2023. The Greater Hamilton Health Network is an Ontario Health Team – a collaboration of local health and social service partners aiming to provide a coordinated continuum of care to the greater Hamilton area. The Physician Recruitment and Retention program will become an independent department within the GHHN, reporting to its Executive Director. Moving the program to the GHHN will address some of the challenges with the program structure by increasing clarity on accountability and operational oversight, reducing operational and reporting inefficiencies, and stabilizing funding agreements and staffing structure. Following the transfer of the program, the GHHN will report on key performance indicators annually to the Board of Health.

As requested at the August 10, 2022 Board of Health, this report outlines the funding structure for the Hamilton Recruitment and Retention program and reports on a few key performance indicators.

Funding Structure & 2022 Budget

The Physician Recruitment and Retention program is funded by multiple partners. Funding contributions are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Dec 1, 2021 – Nov 30, 2022 Program Operating Budget

Revenue	Budget
Balance Carried Forward from 2021	\$443,706.76
City of Hamilton	\$75,000.00
McMaster University	\$25,000.00
St. Joseph's Healthcare	\$20,000.00
Hamilton Health Sciences	\$20,000.00
McMaster University Dept of Family Medicine	\$15,000.00
Hamilton Family Health Team	\$25,000.00
Total Revenue	\$180,000.00
Operating Expenses	
Wages & Benefits	\$115,820.25
Office Expenses	\$5,000.00
Printing / Communications	\$500.00
Travel Expenses	\$5,000.00
Promotional Items	\$5,000.00
Events / Meals / Functions	\$500.00
Medical Conferences & Job Fairs	\$9,350.00
Advertising / Public Relations	\$1,500.00
Total Budgeted Expenditures	\$142,670.25

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Net – Funding Surplus (Shortfall)	\$481,036.51
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In-Kind Contributions	Budget
McMaster University Dept of Family Medicine (office space)	\$7,875.00
Hamilton Chamber of Commerce (human resources)	\$25,000.00
Total In-Kind Contribution	\$32,875.00

Physician Recruitment Key Performance Indicators

The Physician Recruitment and Retention program has supported the recruitment of 412 family physicians to Hamilton since 2005, which has increased the overall number of family physicians in Hamilton and replaced physicians who retired or left the community. The total number of active family physicians (including permanent and long-term locum physicians) in Hamilton has increased from 345 in 2005 to 364 in 2021 – a net increase of 19 family physicians. In 2021 alone, the program successfully recruited 48 physicians to Hamilton (28 permanent and 20 locum/temporary). This year, the program is on track to exceed the 2021 recruitment numbers. As of June 20, 2022, 46 physicians had been recruited to Hamilton (23 permanent and 23 locum/temporary).

The Ministry of Health sets targets for the ratio of physicians to population. The target is one physician for every 1380 residents. The number of active family physicians by community has been collected since 2009. Table 2, below, compares the number of physicians per community to the target, along with the physician shortage (i.e. the number of additional physicians needed to meet the Ministry target). The physician shortage for 2009 is compared to the shortage in 2021 to show progress over time.

Table 2: Physician shortage/surplus and progress in recruitment by community

Community	Target # of physicians (based on 2021 census)	Actual # of physicians (2021)	Physician shortage (2021)	Physician shortage (2009)
Ancaster	32	24	8*	9*
Dundas	18	22	- 4	- 4
Flamborough	34	25	9*	10*
Glanbrook	25	2	23*	9*
Hamilton	249	244	5*	8*
Lower	135	151	16	Not Applicable
Upper	113	93	20*	Not Applicable
Stoney Creek	55	47	8*	19*
Total	413	364	49*	51*

* Denotes a physician shortage

Stoney Creek had the greatest improvement in physician shortage. In 2009, Stoney Creek was short 19 physicians, compared to only eight in 2021. Most other communities made modest improvements in the physician shortage, with the exception of Glanbrook.

Since 2009, Glanbrook has more than doubled in size (from 15,293 residents in 2009 to 35,075 residents in 2021) without a corresponding increase in the number of family physicians. Part of the challenge with recruiting family physicians to Glanbrook is the lack of suitable family practice space and the fact that there are no Family Health Organization models of care (i.e. team care models) in the area. Most new family physicians prefer to work in a team care setting. Despite the low physician count in Glanbrook, many patients travel about ten minutes to family physicians on Hamilton Mountain or Stoney Creek Mountain, where, in both cases, the physician count has increased.

The future need for increased family physicians can be estimated, in part, by the anticipated number of retirements in the field. Although the City of Hamilton and the Physician Recruitment and Retention program do not collect or store personal information on physicians, year of medical school completion can be used to estimate anticipated retirements. This data highlights that there are currently 48 physicians who completed medical school prior to 1984 and may be nearing retirement within the next few years (Table 3).

Table 3: Hamilton Physicians by Year of Medical School Completion:

Year of Medical School Completion	Number of physicians
2009 – 2022	100
1999 - 2008	83
1989 - 1998	93
1984 - 1988	40
1979 - 1983	28
Prior to 1979	20

The number of active family physicians who have completed medical school within the past 23 years has increased from 144 physicians in 2010 to 183 physicians in 2022. Using this data, the estimated average age of active family physicians in Hamilton has likely decreased since 2010. This indicates that the program has had success in sourcing younger candidates.

Successes, Challenges and Next Steps

Since its inception, the Physician Recruitment and Retention program has increased the supply of family physicians to help meet the needs of a growing population, while replacing lost capacity due to retirements and departures. The program has supported a net increase in family physicians in Hamilton during a period of widespread physician shortages across the province and country. The program has provided coverage for parental and medical leaves, vacations, sabbaticals and developed longer term staffing solutions to alleviate burnout – all of which keep practices open and ensure patients can access care. Outside of traditional family practice settings, the Physician Recruitment

and Retention program has connected many candidates with community health centres, Shelter Health Network, McMaster's Student Wellness Centre, and West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby. The program also acts as a resource to local family physicians and family medicine residents, and provides advice to help physicians navigate through the practice management side of family medicine.

Despite the success of the program, physician recruitment in Hamilton faces many challenges. Hamilton is competing with other communities across the province for a very limited pool of family medicine candidates. Current physicians are facing burnout due to COVID-19 and increased on-call requirements in the new Ontario Physician Services Agreement. As noted above, there are likely a number of family physicians in Hamilton nearing retirement, many of whom have large patient rosters in solo practices scattered throughout the city. As younger candidates are often seeking greater work-life balance in group settings, succession planning for these retiring physicians will require creative solutions.

The Physician Recruitment and Retention program plans to continue to build its network of candidates through attendance at recruitment events, advertising positions online and an increased social media presence. The program is exploring options for recruitment from outside Ontario, including international advertising and recruitment events in the United States and the United Kingdom. In the coming years, the program will foster stronger relationships with long-term care organizations as this field will likely require increasing support in the future.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not Applicable.