



January 6, 2010

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
10<sup>th</sup>. Floor, Hepburn Block  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2C4

Attention: The Honourable Deb Matthews

Dear Minister Matthews;

**Subjects: International Medical Graduates and  
Underserviced Designations for the Province of Ontario**

By way of introduction, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce is the oldest, largest and most broadly based business organization within the greater Hamilton economic region. Today, we comprise almost 2,100 individual members representing 1,200 employers of all sizes and sectors who collectively employ some 75,000 Hamiltonians, full time, from all parts of this Community; indeed, and many beyond.

Further to the letter to you from Mayor Fred Eisenberger dated November 30, 2009, and also his letters to Minister McMeekin of November 27, 2009 and October 30, 2008 – copies attached - covering these above noted matters; we wish to reiterate our long standing and well known public position that, regardless of the current technicalities of Provincial regulations in the Designation of “Underserviced” municipalities; we, nevertheless, do consider that with the current estimated immediate (and growing) shortage of three dozen or so family doctors, the City of Hamilton is indeed truly “underserviced” in any and all truly practical realities.

Specifically, the number of physicians currently in general practice in this community is now clearly inadequate to the growing needs of an aging population of now almost 510,000. Plus, we would point out that under the Province’s own “Places to Grow” legislation, Hamilton is a designated growth centre with scheduled further net 20% or more population increase anticipated over the next decade or more, and currently those doctors in general practice are themselves aging and will need replacement – this gap, if unaddressed, will only grow materially.

By way of illustration, the local Physician Recruitment Officer (who is incidentally employed through the Chamber) has advised us of this real life example; “As recently as three weeks ago, an internationally trained medical doctor completing her residency program at Western (University) and interested in practicing in Hamilton, was told by the Ministry of Health that she is not allowed to practice in Hamilton when she graduates next month as we are not designated underserved. **This, in spite of the fact, that the province has quietly granted the City of London permission to recruit international medical graduates.**”

As quality of life issue is one of the fundamental determinates of attractiveness of any community to potential reputable employers; and access to family medical care a basic necessity in that regard; this growing crisis places this City at a material competitive disadvantage in terms of our ability to attract and retain private sector jobs and generate prosperity for our region.

Further, it places the employees of our members and their families living in this community at material and unacceptable level of increased risk when compared to even neighbouring, more affluent, jurisdictions, such as Burlington, who are designated as “underserved”, when their gap is significantly less, and they are not a designated growth centre under your “Places to Grow” guidelines. Clearly, there is a fundamental mismatch here, which needs to be addressed.

Thus, to us, this is more than an issue of basic economic competitiveness. It is indeed a matter of fundamental fairness, and reasonably equitable access to basic health services. Therefore, in brief, we are in full accord with Mayor Eisenberger's recent correspondence and strongly endorse and encourage the Minister to adopt whatever measures necessary, including (but not restricted to) those recommended by the City in the referenced correspondence, to expeditiously and permanently address this fundamental inequity.

Please refer any questions in this matter to our Chief Executive Officer, John Dolbec, at (905) 522-1151 ext. #229 or [j.Dolbec@hamiltonchamber.on.ca](mailto:j.Dolbec@hamiltonchamber.on.ca).

Otherwise, I do thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

Ruth Liebersbach, President  
Hamilton Chamber Of Commerce

Enclosure (2)  
RJD

cc: As per City of Hamilton letter d. November 30, 2009, plus:  
- All Directors, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, including Chairs of our Ancaster, Dundas & Glanbrook Divisions.  
- All members, Chambers' Government Affairs Committee, including reps. of Flamborough and Stoney Creek Chambers of Commerce  
- Len Crispino, President & CEO, Ontario Chamber of Commerce



THE CITY OF  
**HAMILTON**  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 30, 2009

The Honourable Deb Matthews  
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hepburn Block  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

**Subject: International Medical Graduates**

Dear Minister Matthews:

This letter is to advise that, at its meeting of Wednesday, November 25, 2009 Hamilton City Council approved Item 2 of the Board of Health Report 09-010; specifically recommending (b)(ii), as shown below:

**2. Physician Recruitment and Retention Steering Committee Report 09-001 (Item 8.1)**

**(a) Key Performance Indicators (Item 5.3)**

That the Key Performance Indicators, attached as Appendix A to Report 09-001, be received.

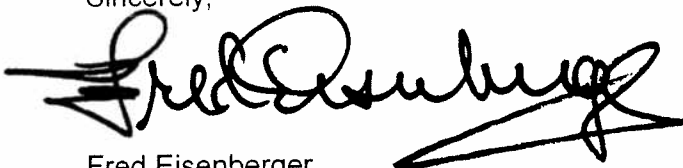
**(b) Underserviced Designation (Item 7.1)**

- (i) That, based on the identified critical need for additional physicians within the city of Hamilton, the Mayor send a subsequent letter (original letter attached hereto as Appendix A) to the Honourable Ted McMeekin, Minister of Government and Consumer Services, respecting the proposed legislation changes and what the Province is proposing as a solution, regarding Underserviced Designations for Ontario municipalities;
- (ii) **That the Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long Term Care, be requested to advise the City of Hamilton when the International Medical Graduates (IMGs), with Return of Service agreements and who are completing their residency training at an Ontario medical school, will be able to practice in Hamilton;**

- (iii) That all local MPPs, MP's, the Academy of Medicine, The Ontario Medical Association, the Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton Health Sciences, St. Joseph's Healthcare, the Fairness to Hamilton Campaign Sub-committee, Hamilton Community Foundation, the Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty, the Hamilton Spectator and other local media be copied on the letter to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services respecting Hamilton's Underserviced Designation status (for physicians).

We respectfully request your timely response to this very important matter. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Fred Eisenberger  
Mayor

Attachment (1)

cc: Sophia Aggelonitis, MPP, Hamilton Mountain  
Tim Hudak, MPP, Niagara West – Glanbrook  
Andrea Horwath, MPP, Hamilton Centre  
Paul Miller, MPP, Hamilton East  
David Sweet, MP, Ancaster - Dundas - Flamborough – Westdale  
Dean Allison, MP, Niagara West - Glanbrook  
David Christopherson, MP, Hamilton Centre  
Wayne Marston, MP, Hamilton East- Stoney Creek  
Chris Charlton, MP, Hamilton Mountain  
Academy of Medicine (Hamilton)  
The Ontario Medical Association  
Chamber of Commerce (Hamilton)  
Hamilton Health Sciences  
St. Joseph's Healthcare  
Fairness to Hamilton Campaign Sub-committee  
Hamilton Community Foundation  
Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty  
The Hamilton Spectator and other local media



THE CITY OF  
**HAMILTON**  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 27, 2009

The Honourable Ted McMeekin,  
Minister of Government Services  
4320 – 99 Wellesley Street West  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Whitney Block  
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3

**Subject: Underserviced Designations for the Province of Ontario**

Dear Minister McMeekin,

Subsequent to our letter of October 30, 2008, respecting the City of Hamilton's Underserviced Designation, at its meeting of Wednesday, November 25, 2009, Hamilton City Council approved Item 2 of the Board of Health Report 09-010; specifically recommending (b)(i), as follows:

**2. Physician Recruitment and Retention Steering Committee Report 09-001 (Item 8.1)**

**(a) Key Performance Indicators (Item 5.3)**

That the Key Performance Indicators, attached as Appendix A to Report 09-001, be received.

**(b) Underserviced Designation (Item 7.1)**

**(i) That, based on the identified critical need for additional physicians within the city of Hamilton, the Mayor send a subsequent letter (original letter attached hereto as Appendix A) to the Honourable Ted McMeekin, Minister of Government and Consumer Services, respecting the proposed legislation changes and what the Province is proposing as a solution, regarding Underserviced Designations for Ontario municipalities;**

**(ii) That the Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long Term Care, be requested to advise the City of Hamilton when the International Medical Graduates (IMGs), with Return of Service agreements and who are completing their residency training at an Ontario medical school, will be able to practice in Hamilton;**

2. For our population of 513,000 we have 336 family physicians; a ratio of 1 physician for 1,527 citizens.

Ministry guidelines suggest a ratio of 1 physician for 1,380 citizens. This formula would indicate an immediate shortage in Hamilton of 35 family physicians. Hamilton counts both permanent and locum family physicians in our totals to give a complete picture of the number of physicians practicing in the community. Designated underserved communities count only permanent, and sometimes only permanent, full-time physicians. The Ministry should only count those with billable hours and active practices. In addition, perhaps there is an argument to be made for the exemption of doctors who spend 75% to 100% of their time doing research, as well as doctors who teach full-time at the DeGroot School of Medicine.

3. The suburbs of Hamilton, including Waterdown, Glanbrook, and Ancaster, have not had a single new physician in over 4 years in spite of tremendous population growth.

Waterdown recently lost 2 more of its physicians. The remaining 11 physicians have an average age of 58, which is 6 years older than the provincial average of 52 years. MD Management notes that 55 is the age at which physicians begin to contemplate retirement. The chart below illustrates the age ranges of Hamilton's family physicians.

**HAMILTON'S FAMILY PHYSICIAN AGE MATRIX**

	2008 Septem ber	2008 July	2007 Decemb er	2007 July
<b>Total Family Physicians</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>341</b>
Average Age	51.9	52.4	52.6	52.3
Physicians in their 20's and 30's	50	43	37	38
Physicians in their 40's	89	91	95	98
Physicians in their 50's	112	112	109	109
Physicians in their 60's	62	63	66	67
Physicians 70 and Older	20	20	15	15
Physicians Age Unknown	1	2	20	14

4. **Over the past four years, only 2 McMaster University medical graduates have opened permanent comprehensive care practices in the City of Hamilton.**

The pervasive belief is that graduates work close to where they have trained. This is certainly contrary to our experience in Hamilton. Graduates are choosing to practice in Burlington instead of Hamilton because they are eligible for a \$40,000 tuition refund or because they can fulfill their return-of service obligations. This is not acceptable.

5. **IMG's are sticking close to the GTA.**

Compared to Hamilton's 8 permanent family physicians recruited to date in 2008, Halton has recruited 20. Twelve of Halton's 20 new recruits were International Medical Graduates (IMG's) who, in return for acceptance into a residency program, signed an agreement with the MOHLTC to practice in a designated underserved community upon graduation. Hamilton uses its scarce resources to train IMG's and our wealthy neighbour benefits. Why practice up north when the booming and economically successful Burlington and Milton are designated underserved?

6. **There is precedence for Medical School cities to be designated underserved.**

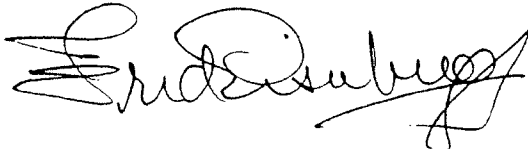
It is interesting to note that some communities located in close proximity to the six Ontario Medical Schools have been designated. Sudbury and Thunder Bay are both designated even though there are campuses for the Northern Ontario School of Medicine within those two municipalities. Burlington is enjoying the benefits of being declared underserved in spite of having a teaching unit and soon-to-be teaching hospital.

We are not asking for special treatment. Rather, we are advocating for legitimate change to the existing criteria. Upon reviewing the criteria, the program, and the designations to date, there is no doubt that the Underserved Area Program is prescriptive. There are legitimate areas within Southern Ontario that rely on the UAP as their source of physicians. However, our shortage needs to be recognized. A possible solution is for a percentage of our need to be filled by IMG's. There are many Canadians studying abroad (CSA's) who would love to come home to practice but are unable to cope with the Ministry's demands that they practice 5 years in another community. Why can they not practice here?

Currently, 40,000 of our citizens do not have a family doctor. Once again, we respectfully ask that you please help us to have Hamilton declared as underserved.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to discussing this matter with you further. Please reference file # C08-022 when responding to this correspondence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Eisenberger". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "F" and a cursive "Eisenberger".

Fred Eisenberger  
Mayor

cc: Paul Miller, MPP, Hamilton East  
Andrea Horwath, MPP, Hamilton Centre  
Sofia Aggelonitis, MPP, Hamilton Mountain  
Tim Hudak, MPP, Niagara West - Glanbrook





THE CITY OF  
**HAMILTON**  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

October 30, 2008

File # C08-022

The Honourable Ted McMeekin  
Minister of Government and Consumer Services  
Whitney Block  
99 Wellesley Street  
4th Floor, Suite 4320  
Toronto ON M7A 1W3

Dear Minister McMeekin,

Since the establishment of the City of Hamilton's Physician Recruitment and Retention initiative almost four years ago, we have competed for physicians being lured elsewhere by Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) incentives provided through the Underserviced Area Program (UAP). Every single community surrounding Hamilton has been designated as underserviced while we have been unsuccessful in our attempt to obtain the same status in spite of our obvious need. The criteria for evaluating communities has not been applied equitably and we are looking for your help in rectifying the situation. Here are the facts:

- 1. We continue to have an overall net loss of physicians and an increasing number of physicians are working on a locum and part-time basis.**

While the Physician Recruitment and Retention program has had some success, it is not enough. As the chart below indicates, the number of recruited physicians working on a permanent basis has decreased substantially in the last couple of years. As well, many of the new permanent recruits only work part-time.

**RESULTS SINCE INCEPTION OF FAMILY PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total # of New Recruits</b>	<b>Permanent</b>	<b>Locum</b>	<b>Total # of Family Physicians</b>
2005	17	12	5	345
2006	17	13	4	341
2007	19	11	8	340
2008*	15	8	7	336

\* as at Sept. 15/08

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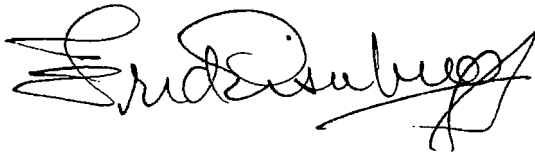
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