



Representing the Districts of Kenora, Rainy River and Thunder Bay

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July 9, 2012

Honourable Deborah Matthews
Minister of Health and Long Term Care
10th Floor, 80 Grosvenor Street, Hepburn Block
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Matthews:

Your recent announcement regarding changes to physician pay has raised some concerns among the members of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association. We applaud your work to update OHIP fees to reflect changes in technology and avoid double-payments. However, we believe that some proposed changes will impact the rural generalist disproportionately and could affect the ability of Northern and rural communities to recruit and retain doctors.

Cuts to incentives such as subsidized CMPA (Medical Malpractice) will have a greater impact to those GPs that provide specialized services such as obstetrics, anesthesia and GP surgery, and could result in those physicians no longer providing these services. In addition, changes to the Access Bonus (a bonus that physicians receive for being available to see their own patients in clinic) would make it harder for rural physicians to provide the comprehensive care in the hospital and emergency room. It is imperative that Northern Rural physicians be able to work in northern hospitals, providing anesthetics, obstetrics, general surgery and keeping the E.R.'s open. They are often required to work both in hospital and see patients in their clinic. They should not suffer due to this burden of geography and economics.

One size does not fit all. Imposing unilateral changes that will impact the ability of Northern and Rural physicians to provide the high quality care that they wish to and are accustomed to is not an acceptable way to balance the budget. We encourage you to review these changes to make certain that Northern and Rural physicians are not impacted disproportionately and to ensure that the progress that has been made in physician recruitment in recent years is not reversed.

Sincerely,

Ron Nelson
President
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c. Minister Michael Gravelle, MPP, Thunder Bay-Superior North
Bill Mauro, MPP, Thunder Bay-Atikokan
Sarah Campbell, MPP, Kenora-Rainy River

Mike Mantha, MPP, Algoma-Manitoulin
Al Spacek, President, FONOM
Bill Vrebosch, Chair, Rural Ontario Municipal Association

