

**Municipality of Huron Shores**

7 Bridge Street, PO Box 460  
Iron Bridge, ON P0R 1H0



Ontario Ministry of Health  
The Honourable Sylvia Jones  
777 Bay Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, On M7A 2J3

May 31, 2023

Minister Jones;

I am writing to you today regarding urgent and deeply-concerning challenges in medical care in the Municipality of Huron Shores and surrounding areas.

Over the past week, the Emergency Department at North Shore Health Network – Thessalon Site has been shut down four times due to a lack of available physicians. This is especially concerning as we have no primary care physicians in the four practices at two medical clinics that help service this site and catchment area. We currently rely on locum coverage.

Your Ministry recently decided to cancel the CTSLEPE funding, a key tool in attracting the locums who have helped keep our Emergency Department open for the last two years. The removal of this program, with no replacement, has made the arduous task of attracting locums even more challenging.

As well, the RNPGEA contract that our primary care physicians work under needs a major overhaul. It is no longer relevant, and acts as an impediment to attracting doctors to practice in the North, particularly in our small medical clinics that serve thousands of patients. This is as significant an issue as the discontinuation of the CTSLEPE funding. Under a different contract, the neighboring practices in Blind River have full complements, including physicians who live in our Municipality. While we appreciate efforts like adding 30 undergraduate positions at NOSM, these are potential long-term fixes that do not address the current crisis.

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The daily closures I mentioned are not the only ones we will face at the Thessalon Site over the next few months. As you can appreciate, any Emergency Department closure puts patients at risk, particularly as the next nearest sites are significant distances away. We call on you and your government to engage with stakeholders in the North and provide the tools necessary to keep our Emergency Department open, and to attract physicians to the practices currently sitting empty.

Northern Ontario residents deserve quality local medical care.

Regards,

Matthew Seabrook, Mayor  
Municipality of Huron Shores

c.c: Northern Ontario Municipalities  
The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Michael Mantha, MPP Algoma – Manitoulin  
Ross Romano, MPP Sault Ste Marie  
Lise Vaugeois, MPP Thunder Bay – Superior North  
Hon. George Pirie, MPP Timmins  
Jamie West, MPP Sudbury  
Hon. Victor Fedeli, MPP Nipissing  
Hon. Greg Rickford, MPP Kenora – Rainy River