

September _____, 2023

Hon. Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Room 28, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A1
Sent Via Email: Premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford,

In 2002 the Conservative Government created the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) to address the health needs of the region, improve access to quality care, and contribute to the economic development of Northern Ontario. On April 1, 2022, we celebrated as your Government proclaimed NOSM a standalone university, becoming Canada's only independent Medical University.

NOSM University is one of the greatest successes in Canada as it relates to addressing health workforce supply, with over 50% of graduates choosing family medicine as a career and over 90% of combined MD and postgraduate learners staying in Northern Ontario. Today, over 400,000 northerners receive primary and acute care from a NOSM University-trained doctor. Furthermore, many specialists have been created by NOSM University, providing care closer to home and reducing the need for patients to travel south to decrease the cost of the Northern Health Travel Grant.

We attribute much of this success to a "distributed community engaged learning" model that places its learners in 90 communities (135 organizations) across Northern Ontario throughout the academic year. NOSM University's economic impact in our region is immeasurable, but the institution is in jeopardy.

Northern Ontario remains in a healthcare crisis. More than 350 physicians are currently needed to fill shortages, which does not account for anticipated retirements. Areas of the North that are still in dire need of healthcare services are rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. NOSM University is the only Northern solution to meeting our physician workforce needs.

We are grateful for your Government's decision to increase medical school spaces at NOSM University. Still, the momentum gained in addressing the health inequities in the North will be considerably impacted by the lack of financial sustainability for this newly created University.

While the creation of NOSM University gives it the autonomy to yield tremendous success in Northern physician recruitment and retention, the costs associated with

becoming a university, undertaking an unprecedented expansion, and continuing to offer world-class community-based education are significant. The University's current base funding rates have not been increased sufficiently, and cost reductions are no longer attainable or feasible.

As such, we respectfully support NOSM University's request to the Province of Ontario for a permanent increase in annual base funding of \$4.0 million before the end of this fiscal year so it can continue to deliver on the mandate that the Conservative Government established initially in response to the needs of Northern municipalities.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Mayor