

## **OCFP Responds to Ontario's Plan to Stay Open**

*Family doctors must be included in the solutions to address the current healthcare crisis*

TORONTO, ON, August 18, 2022 – Our entire healthcare system is under enormous strain – and that includes family doctors.

The announcement today from Ontario's Minister of Health Sylvia Jones begins to address the urgent and pressing needs in hospital emergency departments but overlooks the role of primary care and, specifically, family doctors.

The best healthcare systems in the world are those where everyone has access to a family doctor. It is critical that family doctors be included in the solutions to address the current crisis in our healthcare system.

Key to easing pressure in emergency departments is keeping more patients out of hospitals in the first place. To protect hospital capacity, we need to better enable health where most care happens – in primary care, anchored by family doctors.

And yet, Ontario is facing a severe family doctor shortage – 1.3 million Ontarians reported in 2019 that they do not have a family doctor. We believe the current number of Ontarians without a family doctor to be higher and this number is expected to continue to grow as more family doctors leave the profession and fewer join a family practice.

The OCFP has put forward short-term and long-term solutions to ensure Ontarians get the care they need in the right place and the right time. While announcements about increased medical school/residency spots and streamlining licensing for international physicians are positive steps, we need comprehensive solutions that will help stabilize the system and the crisis facing family medicine. We are urging the Ontario government to do three things:

1. Ensure Ontarians have a family doctor working alongside a team, so patients can get the help they need faster.
2. Improve the accessibility of care by increasing the time that family doctors can spend providing direct patient care.
3. Ensure every Ontarian has a family doctor by recruiting and retaining more family doctors within the province.

We are ready to get to work with the Ontario government to address these issues.

### **About the Ontario College of Family Physicians**

The OCFP represents more than 15,000 family doctors who support Ontarians in both urban and rural communities in our province.

### **Media Contact**

Karen Leiva  
Director, Communications  
[media@ocfp.on.ca](mailto:media@ocfp.on.ca)