



**FORT FRANCES & DISTRICT PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
COMMITTEE**

110 Victoria Avenue, Fort Frances, ON P9A 2B7 (807) 275 9794 or T.Hamilton@rhcf.on.ca

January 18, 2022

Hon. Marcus Powlowski
MP, Thunder Bay-Rainy River
905 E Victoria Avenue, Unit 1
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7C 1B3
Marcus.Powlowski@parl.gc.ca

Hon. Greg Rickford,
MPP, Kenora-Rainy River
300 McClellan Ave. East Room
Kenora, ON P9N 1A8
greg.rickford@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Powlowski & Minister Rickford:

RE: Physician Recruitment and Retention Crisis

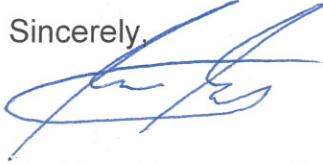
The status of Physician Recruitment and Retention in the Rainy River District is in **crisis**. We do not use that term lightly, we have long prided ourselves on trying to make it work, but the current situation is not sustainable. Physicians are burnt out, resignation letters have been submitted and unfortunately, others are being written. The prospect of having to close facilities is real. The stability of healthcare in the region is at risk. The intent of this letter is first to raise awareness, and then hopefully be part of real change.

All three sites - Fort Frances, Emo and Rainy River - are each facing unique challenges, but a unifying problem is lack of physicians. A huge portion of the population, including surrounding First Nations, do not currently have access to Primary Care. There is NO capacity in the already stretched system to absorb these patients. Demand at all regional clinics far outweigh appointment availability. Patients are becoming understandably disgruntled. Emergency departments are busy and hospitals are more than full. With more physicians leaving, the situation will only get worse. We have local residents with no family doctor and recent diagnoses of serious medical conditions (i.e. cancer, diabetes or depression) and they have nowhere to go.

This is a complex problem that requires short, medium and long-term solutions. Immediate locum coverage and funding is needed so patients can be seen today. Local and newly recruited physicians need to find ways to sustain their current practices. The Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) needs to continue to select and train physicians that are committed to the North, ensuring a pipeline of new graduates.

The district's physicians are united on this front. This letter is being forwarded to all Municipal, Provincial and Federal government representatives. We encourage the residents of this district to also voice their concerns to their local Municipal, Provincial and Federal representatives.

Sincerely,



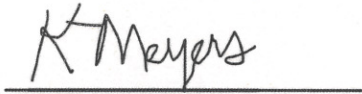
Dr. Marc Ruppenstein
Chair – Fort Frances and District Recruitment and Retention Committee
Vice-President, Keffer Medicine Professional Corporation (KMPC)



Todd Hamilton
Physician Recruiter



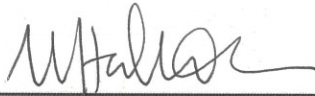
Dr. Karim Eltawil
La Verendrye Chief of Staff



Dr. Kim Meyers
Emo Chief of Staff



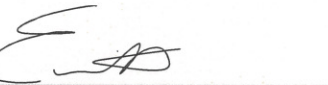
Dr. Catherine Caron
Rainy River Medical Group



Dr. Melanie Halvorsen
President, Keffer Medicine Prof. Corp.



Dr. Lucas Keffer
La Verendrye Assoc. Chief of Staff



Dr. Joseph Ennett
Rainy River Chief of Staff



Dr. Vaishali Patel
ER Lead & Scheduler

c.c. Rainy River District Municipalities (via email)
Area First Nation Chiefs (via email)
Rainy River District Ontario Health Team (via email)