

Physician Recruitment Update

Port Colborne

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Overview of the Physician Recruitment Program

01

The **Physician Recruitment Program** works to **attract, retain, and support** family physicians in Niagara to address **primary care shortages**.

02

In **November 2024**, the program moved from **Public Health to Economic Development**, strengthening **strategic marketing and outreach efforts**.

03

Works with **municipalities, clinic leads, economic development, and health sector partners** to coordinate recruitment efforts.

04

Enhanced **communications, promotional materials, and physician engagement** to position Niagara as a **top destination for medical professionals**.

05

Despite recent recruitment success, **ongoing retirements and population growth** continue to drive demand for **long-term recruitment strategies**.

State of Primary Care in Niagara

- **Niagara welcomed 24 new physicians** in 2024 marking a record year for regional recruitment. To date we have **13 new physicians with 5 more starting in 2025**.
- **37 physicians are currently accepting patients**, the highest number at one time on the Niagara Region's "Find a Doctor" page.
- **2024 was our most successful year on record** for physician recruitment, but with Niagara's growing population, we continue working to meet increasing healthcare demands.



Niagara Physician Statistics 2020 - 2025

Year	New Primary Care Physicians to Niagara	Physicians Out of Practice in Niagara	Net	Total Family Physicians in Niagara; Signatory and Non-Signatory Primary Care	1:1380 Doc:Pop Ratio # needed	Recommend based on population
2020	18	13	5	253	72	325
2021	17	20	-3	250	96	346
2022	17	17	0	250	96	346
2023	19	9	10	260	86	346
2024	24	8	16	276	105	381
2025	15	2	13	289	92	381

*** 3 more starting in 2025**

*** 5 more leaving in 2025**

Statistics By Municipality for Family Physicians 2025

Municipality	2023 Census Est.	Current # of Physicians including FFS/CHC docs	% of Physicians over 65	% of Physicians over 70	Physicians needed with a doc:pop ratio 1:1380	# of Docs Short
FORT ERIE	36,209	16	19%	6%	26	10
GRIMSBY	31,233	22	5%	5%	23	1
LINCOLN	28,203	16	13%	6%	20	4
NIAGARA FALLS	105,552	44	14%	9%	76	32
NOTL	20,472	13	0%	0%	15	2
PELHAM	19,399	13	8%	8%	14	1
PORT COLBORNE	21,312	10	10%	10%	15	5
ST. CATHARINES	149,550	97	14%	6%	108	11
THOROLD	26,466	12	17%	8%	19	7
WAINFLEET	7,384	0	0%	0%	5	5
WELLAND	62,776	38	24%	11%	45	7
WEST LINCOLN	16,796	8	0%	0%	12	4
Totals	525,352	289	13%	8%	381	92

sources: 2023 census estimates stats can
Niagara Physician Recruitment June 2025
Includes CHC physicians

Challenges and Opportunities



- **13%** of current physicians are **over 65** and nearing retirement
- **Expansion of medical school seats** by Ontario Government provides future opportunity
- **Alignment of patients** to providers who are accepting has become a priority
- **Immigration and licensing** pathways have become streamlined

Collaborative Recommendations from Municipal Roundtable

Participation from all Niagara CAOs, Mayors, Economic Development, and Health Sector Partners:

5 Strategic Outcomes:

- Person-centered approach
- Regional coordination
- Small business support
- Advocacy
- Long-term capacity building

8 Priorities for Action:

- Reviewing and improving incentives
- Streamlining practice setup
- Expanding Niagara's physician recruitment office
- Strengthening partnerships and leveraging municipal land/assets
- Enhancing advocacy and systemic policy change efforts



International Recruitment Efforts

- Physician recruitment initiatives in the U.S., U.K., Ireland, and Australia.
- Over **60% of new Niagara physicians** recruited from the U.K.
- **Key recruitment events in 2025:**
 - OPRA Career Fair (Birmingham, May 2024) – Connected with 90+ family physicians looking to relocate to Ontario
 - AAFP FMX (Anaheim CA, Oct 2025) – Physicians in practice, largest AAFP conference in the US
 - Repatriation Expo (Ireland, October 2025) – Connected with 150+ students
 - McMaster Orientation, Graduation and ongoing engagement events
 - 2026, OPRA Med School Career Fair
 - 2025, OPRA Caribbean Repatriation Expo



Strategic Partnerships



- Southern Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance (**SOPRA**) (Founded September 2023):
- **19 recruitment programs** across Ontario Health West
- **Shared database** and international marketing strategy
- Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance (**OPRA**) (Founded April 2024)
- Province-wide initiative to coordinate recruitment efforts

Conclusion



2024 was the strongest year on record for physician recruitment



Continued commitment to attracting and retaining top medical talent



Ongoing collaboration with regional and municipal partners



Ensuring long-term access to primary care for Niagara residents

Questions & Contact:

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