May 26, 2006

TO: All Municipalities in the Province of Ontario

RE: Family Physician Shortage

The Council of the Regional Municipality of York at its meeting of May 25, 2006 adopted the following resolution regarding the family physician shortage:

WHEREAS the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) released a report entitled Ontario Physician Shortage 2005: seeds of progress, but resource crisis deepening; and,

WHEREAS this Report predicts that the physician shortage in Ontario will reach 2,347 in 2006 and 2,648 in 2008; and

WHEREAS it is estimated that 1.2 million Ontarians are without a Family Physician; the population of Ontario continues to grow and age and this problem will grow worse over time as more physicians retire; and

WHEREAS in York Region, Georgina and East Gwillimbury are designated by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as underserviced areas for Family Physicians; and

WHEREAS presently there are thousands of Family Physicians practicing in provinces outside of Ontario who have the ability to move between provinces and to open practices without delay in provinces other than Ontario; and

WHEREAS the OMA estimates that over 10,000 Canadian trained physicians are currently practicing in the United States; and

WHEREAS the current licensing and administrative barriers that physicians face through Practice Assessment Programs and return of service requirements lead to delays of between one and five years for Family Physicians who wish to repatriate to the province of Ontario; and

WHEREAS the ability for medical residents to practice under a restricted license to assist with the physician human resource shortage is available in 8 out of 10 provinces but not in Ontario; and

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WHEREAS the Regional Municipality of York, through previous resolutions, also recognizes the barriers faced by foreign trained physicians to practicing in Ontario;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Regional Municipality of York urges the Government of the Province of Ontario and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario take immediate action to:

1. develop new and more effective (repatriation) programs aimed at recruiting Canadian/Ontario-trained physicians currently practicing in other provinces, Ontario medical students studying in other provinces and Canadian–trained physicians currently practicing in the United States;

2. eliminate all return of service requirements for Canadian-trained physicians;

3. prevent delays to physicians working in other provinces who wish to set up practice in Ontario by putting greater reliance on their status as determined by the College of Physicians and Surgeons in those provinces;

4. remove the barriers to restricted licensure for Ontario medical residents in training; and

5. develop appropriate retention measures for highly skilled physicians

THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Ontario Minister of Health and Long Term Care, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, all municipalities in Ontario, all York Region MPPs and MPs, the Leaders of the Opposition Parties, and the College of Family Physicians of Canada.