REPORT 08-002
PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STEERING COMMITTEE
Monday, September 29, 2008
8:30 a.m.
Councillors’ Boardroom, Suite 230
City Centre, 77 James Street North
Hamilton, ON

Present: Councillors L. Ferguson (Chair), M. McCarthy, T. Whitehead, L. Falco
Absent with Regrets: Dr. Scott Wooder (Vice Chair) – Medical Business
Also Present: J. Walker, Healthcare Recruitment Specialist, Hamilton Physicians
D. Leaney, Administrative Assistant, Hamilton Physicians
T. Tollis, Director, Budgets and Finance
E. Lee, Advisor, Community Relations
A. Parle, Senior Policy Analyst, Public Health Services
S. Paparella, Legislative Assistant, City Clerk’s Office

THE PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STEERING COMMITTEE PRESENTS REPORT 08-002 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:

1. Management Sub-Committee Minutes, dated March 31, 2008 (Item 4.1)
   That the Management Sub-committee meeting Minutes, dated March 31, 2008, be received.

2. Key Performance Indicators (Item 4.2)
   That the Key Performance Indicators, as of September 15, 2008, be received.

3. Current Physician Statistics, as of September 15, 2008 (Item 4.3)
   That the Current Physician Statistics, as of September 15, 2008, be received.
4. Physician Recruitment and Retention Budget – December 1, 2007 to November 30, 2008 (Item 4.4)

That the Physician Recruitment and Retention Budget – December 1, 2007 to November 30, 2008, be received.

5. Resubmission of Underserviced Application (Physicians) (Item 5.1)

(a) That the Mayor be authorized and directed to forward the letter, attached as Appendix A to Report 08-002, to the Honourable Ted McMeekin, Minister of Government and Consumer Services respecting the City of Hamilton’s application for Underserviced Designation regarding family physicians.

(b) That the Physician Recruitment Specialist be authorized and directed to resubmit, on behalf of the City of Hamilton, an Application for Underserviced Designation to the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care.

6. Unpaid Summer Leave of Absence (Item 7.1)

That the unpaid summer leave of absence, requested by the Physician Recruiter, from June 22, 2009 through September 7, 2009, be approved.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF COMMITTEE:

(a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (Item 1)

There were no changes to the agenda.

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 2)

There were none declared.

(c) APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 3)

3.1 January 10, 2008

The Minutes of the January 10, 2008 meeting of the Physician Recruitment and Retention Steering Committee were approved, as presented.
(d) **Correspondence from Melanie Hogeveen, Deputy Clerk, Municipality of Kincardine, dated June 23, 2008, respecting the Report on Removing Barriers for International Medical Doctors (Referred by Council, August 7, 2008) (Item 5.2)**

This item will be addressed at the next meeting of the Physician Recruitment and Retention Steering Committee.

(e) **Media Plan (Item 6.1)**

The Management Sub-committee was directed to draft a Media Plan respecting Hamilton’s lack of family physicians and the application process for being designated as “Underserviced” by the Province of Ontario, and report back to the Physician Recruitment and Retention Steering Committee.

(f) **Comparison Study (Item 6.2)**

The Physician Recruitment Specialist was directed to prepare, for the next meeting of the Physician Recruitment and Retention Steering Committee, a comparator study of the statistics between Hamilton and Burlington with respect to the physician shortage.

(g) **Application for Underserviced Designation submitted by the City of Burlington**

The Committee Clerk was directed to request a copy of the application for Underserviced Designation, which was submitted by the City of Burlington to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

(h) **PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL (Item 7.1)**

Committee moved into Closed Session, at 9:45 a.m., to discuss Item 7.1, pursuant to Section 8.1, Sub-section (b) of the City's Procedural By-law 03-301, and Section 239, Sub-section (b) of the *Ontario Municipal Act*, 2001, as the subject matter pertains to personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees.

Committee reconvened in Open Session at 9:50 a.m. and provided its recommendation, as shown in Item 6 above.
(i) ADJOURNMENT (Item 8)

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor L. Ferguson, Chair
Physician Recruitment and Retention Steering Committee

Stephanie Paparella
Legislative Assistant
September 29, 2008
October 30, 2008

The Honourable Ted McMeekin  
Minister of Government and Consumer Services  
Whitney Block  
99 Wellesley Street  
4th Floor, Suite 4320  
Toronto ON  M7A 1W3

Subject: The City of Hamilton’s Application for Underserviced Designation

Dear Minister McMeekin:

Since the establishment of the City of Hamilton’s Physician Recruitment and Retention initiative almost four years ago, we have competed for physicians being lured elsewhere by Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) incentives provided through their underserviced designations. If the incentives of the Underserviced Area Program were truly benefiting the northern communities, as originally intended, and all Southern Ontario communities competed on equal footing, we would understand why we have not been designated as underserviced. However, every single community surrounding Hamilton has been designated as Underserviced; while we have been unsuccessful in our attempt to obtain the same status in spite of our obvious need.

To our eight permanent family physicians recruited in 2008, Halton has recruited 20. Twelve of those 20 new recruits were International Medical Graduates (IMG’s) who, in return for acceptance into a residency program, signed an agreement with the MOHLTC to practice in a designated underserviced community upon graduation. Hamilton uses its scarce resources to train IMG’s and our wealthy neighbour benefits. Why practice up north when the booming and economically successful Burlington and Milton are designated underserviced?

Only two McMaster University Medical graduates, in the last four years, have opened permanent comprehensive care practices, contrary to the pervasive belief that graduates work close to where they have trained. Important to note is that Hamilton counts both permanent and locum family physicians in our totals; to give a complete picture of the number of physicians practicing in the community. Designated underserviced communities count only permanent, and sometimes only permanent, full-time physicians.
Graduating residents are generally in debt because of the high cost of medical training so they choose to go to Burlington rather than Hamilton because they are eligible for a $40,000 tuition refund. This is not acceptable.

For more than four years, zero family physicians have joined practices anywhere in Ancaster, Waterdown or Binbrook in spite of tremendous population growth and need. Waterdown, as just one example, recently lost two of its family physicians. The remaining 11 physicians in Waterdown have an average age of over 58 years old; when the average for the province is 52. MD Management notes that 55 is the age at which physicians begin to contemplate retirement. Indeed, in one month of 2007, four Hamilton family physicians retired, all of whom were in their early 50’s. The chart below illustrates the age ranges of Hamilton’s family physicians:

### Hamilton’s Family Physician Age Matrix

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Family Physicians</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians in their 20’s and 30’s</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians in their 40’s</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians in their 50’s</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians in their 60’s</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians 70 and Older</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians Age Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With no prospects on the horizon for these underserved areas, the situation is only going to get worse. While the Physician Recruitment and Retention program has had some success, it is not enough. As the chart below indicates, the number of physicians working on a permanent basis has decreased substantially in the last couple of years; some of which only work part-time, permanent let alone full-time permanent hours. We are seeing more physicians working on a locum and part-time basis and we continue to experience an overall net loss.

### Results Since Inception of Family Physician Recruitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total # of New Recruits</th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Locum</th>
<th>Total # of Family Physicians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008*</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* As at Sept. 15, 2008.
We are not seeing the long-term commitment from new physicians that is required to ensure that the people of Hamilton can receive comprehensive care from a primary care physician.

We are not asking for special treatment, in fact, we are simply asking for the same criteria to be applied to Hamilton, as has been applied to all other Southern Ontario communities; more specifically our surrounding communities. We currently have 40,000 citizens who do not have a family doctor. Please help us to declare Hamilton as underserved.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to discussing this matter with you further.

Sincerely,

Fred Eisenberger
Mayor, City of Hamilton

cc: Paul Miller, MPP, Hamilton East
    Andrea Horwath, MPP, Hamilton Centre
    Sophia Aggelonitis, MPP, Hamilton Mountain
    Ted McMeekin, MPP, Ancaster – Dundas – Flamborough - Aldershot
    Tim Hudak, MPP, Niagara West - Glanbrook