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Legislative Services

April 9, 2025

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1
premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
Sylvia.Jones@ontario.ca

Dear Honourable Doug Ford and Honourable Sylvia Jones:

Re: Provincial Healthcare Advocacy

Please be advised that, at its meeting on April 8, 2025 the Council of The Corporation of the City of Port Colborne passed the following motion:

Whereas the Province of Ontario has appointed Dr. Philpott as the Chair of the New Primary Care Action Team to develop a strategy to address the shortage of primary care physicians with a mandate to attach all Ontarians to primary care in the next five years (2030); and

Whereas the City of Port Colborne has a population of over 20,000 residents, with just under 10,000 who do not have a primary care physician within the city of Port Colborne, demonstrating a need for improved primary care in the community; and

Whereas residents in Port Colborne require access to local primary care, resulting in a reliance on the Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre as their first point of contact with the healthcare system, which will continue beyond the opening of the South Niagara Hospital in 2028; and

Whereas accessing healthcare services outside of Port Colborne is challenging for residents due to transportation concerns, with all routes to other communities only having one lane for both directions of traffic, and three bridge canal crossings, any obstruction –

whether from an accident, construction, or even heavy traffic – can cause serious delays. This limited access raises concerns not only about access but also about safety, especially in emergencies; and

Whereas Port Colborne is expecting an incredible amount of housing and industrial growth, with over \$2 billion in building permits in 2024, and 7,000 housing units in the development pipeline, which is more than double the number of houses within Port Colborne's urban boundary; and

Whereas the summer population in Port Colborne grows to 40,000 which exacerbates the strain on infrastructure and local healthcare options; and

Whereas Niagara Health's plan has not considered the significant development happening and expected within Port Colborne; and

Whereas Niagara Health's plan to end urgent care and other operations at the Port Colborne site does not consider the need for diagnostic services within the Port Colborne community; and

Whereas, on a recent survey of Port Colborne residents, 96 per cent of residents reported they thought Port Colborne required urgent care healthcare services.

Whereas over 4,000 people – more than 20 per cent of the community's population within just a few weeks – have respectfully expressed their wishes to save and restore the 24/7 urgent care services in Port Colborne via a petition submitted to the Council for the City of Port Colborne, attached hereto; and

Whereas the Council for the City of Port Colborne desires to request for a continuation of funding for Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre operations, without reduction of any funding to Niagara Health for construction and operation of the new South Niagara Hospital; and

Now, therefore, be it resolved,

That: The City of Port Colborne Mayor and Council formally requests the Province of Ontario to continue funding for urgent care health services at Niagara Health's Port Colborne site, without reduction of any funding to Niagara Health for construction and operation of the new South Niagara Hospital; and

That: The City of Port Colborne Mayor and Council formally requests the Province of Ontario to continue funding of diagnostic services, including imaging, with expanded services to support mental health counselling support and addiction services, and other allied health services, including physiotherapy; and

That: The City of Port Colborne Mayor and Council requests that the Province of Ontario put a moratorium on the closure of urgent care centres and the implicit removal of primary care health services from the City of Port Colborne and all small and rural communities in

Ontario until Dr. Philpott's mandate is complete to ensure that all Ontarians are attached to a primary care physician; and

That: This resolution be forwarded to Niagara's local MPPs and circulated to the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and all Ontario municipalities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Madden".

Charlotte Madden
City Clerk

ec: Niagara Region MPP's

- Wayne Gates
- Jennie Stevens
- Jeff Burch
- Sam Oosterhoff

Rural Ontario Municipal Association
All Ontario Municipalities