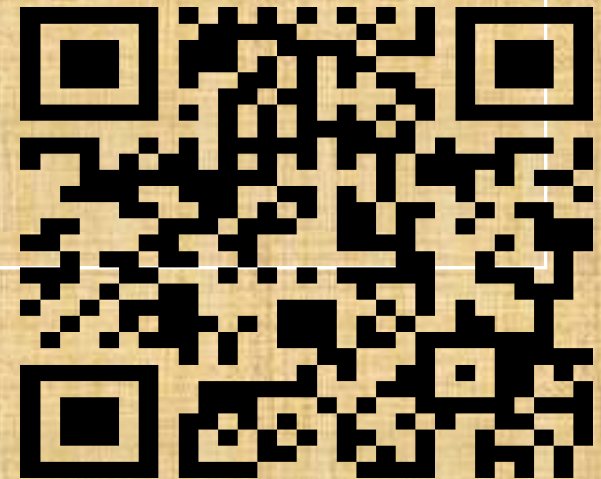


Physician Recruitment in a small Central Ontario municipality

What we learned and what I
would and would not
recommend for you.



**What do you think is the
biggest challenge in health
care recruitment?**



Physician recruitment in Ontario

- “Every region of Ontario is experiencing a shortage of family doctors, and the crisis is only going to get worse if the provincial government doesn't take immediate action”, the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) is warning.
- The number of Ontario residents who don't have a family doctor is currently sitting around 2.3 million people. According to the OMA, this number is expected to nearly double in the next few years.





**What word(s) comes to mind
when you think of doctor
recruitment?**



Lots of correct
answers but
two I am
looking for:

SURVEY SAYS

- Doctor recruitment in Ontario is Really Really Difficult!!!!!!!!!!
- and it is **Not** a municipal responsibility!!!!!!!!!!

So, if it is not a municipal responsibility why am I here today

Because, like many things in the municipal world, it remains outside the municipality's responsibility—until your Council decides otherwise.

Important pieces to know

- Any municipality offering incentives to doctors as part of the recruitment process is almost certainly violating the Municipal Act.
- Section 106 of the Municipal Act, 2001 – anti bonusing – Assistant prohibited - A municipality shall not assist directly or indirectly any manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise through the granting of bonuses for that purpose.

What does that mean?

- There is no standard definition of "bonus," but it generally refers to a benefit granted by a municipality to an individual beyond what is provided to others.
- If you are offering something to a doctor that is not available to others, you are likely engaging in bonusing.
- Talk to a lawyer before you do anything!!!

What happens if we break the Municipal Act

Several municipalities across Ontario have implemented recruitment strategies that seem to violate the Act. To date, the province has not taken any action.

Asphodel Norwood approach

- I took over as CAO on February 5, 2024, and one of the first files I was handed by the Mayor was the new medical center file and he directed me to take it across the finish line.
- Backstory: The community's long-term doctor announced their retirement, causing significant concern among residents. During the fall 2022 election, this became the primary issue that candidates consistently heard from voters.

New Council decides to do something about it

- Council and the CAO at the time decided to pursue the recruitment of a new physician(s). They quickly realized that to be competitive, they would need to offer something that set them apart from other municipalities.
- After assessing feedback from newly graduating doctors, they decided to offer space, staff, and equipment while bringing the doctors on as outside contractors. This approach quickly attracted two doctors, and I successfully recruited a third in the summer of 2024

Our Solution



In March 2024, the new Asphodel-Norwood Medical Centre opened.



To start, our focus was on the retired doctor's former patients which includes residents from across the area.



A new doctor started in December 2024. We expect to roster a total of 1,500 new patients by summer 2025. These are people who generally did not previously have a doctor.



A fourth doctor is scheduled to join the clinic and will start in the Summer of 2025 and will also roster 1,500 patients who did not previously have a doctor over the next 6-12 months.

What makes our Medical Centre different:



- **We prioritize physician feedback:** We have actively listened to doctors' insights and needs.
- **Doctors focus on care, not business:** Our model allows doctors to concentrate on patient care rather than administrative tasks.
- **Municipal responsibility for infrastructure & staffing:** The municipality handles the infrastructure and staffing of the medical centre.
- **Operational duties managed by the municipality:** The operational aspects of the medical centre are managed by the municipality, freeing doctors from these responsibilities.
- **Doctors committed to patient care:** With operational concerns handled by the municipality, doctors can fully focus entirely on their patients.
- **Capacity and service expectations:** Once fully operational, our medical centre is projected to serve between 4,000 and 5,000 individuals. We are addressing a rural and underserved area.

What did we do next?

- In the Spring of 2024, the Mayor and I did a roadshow to the neighboring municipalities with the largest wait list and from that we were able to come to agreements with two communities who agreed to make a financial commitment towards the medical center.
- We also starting lobbying the provincial government to contribute to funding the medical center.

Lessons Learned

- What the Council did not consider was that health care does not recognise borders by that I mean not all the people who wanted to sign up with one of the new doctors were from the Township and under our model the Township tax base was paying for everything.
- They did not explore how costs could be shared by more than one municipality/community.

Where we are today

- Agreements in place with two neighboring communities, one a Township and the other an indigenes community.
- In process of getting not for profit status to give us more flexibility in applying for grants. We expect this to be in place by the end of the summer.
- Have rostered almost 1,500 people with a new doctor who previously did not have a doctor and expect to roster another 1,500 new patients over the next six to twelve months.

Lessons Learned

- Talk to the doctors find out what they want.
- Connect with doctors they are the best resource for finding other doctors.
- Make partnerships with other local municipalities this problem is bigger than anyone of us and it is North American wide.
- Continue to address this with the Province they need to be part of the solution.

QUESTIONS??????

**What was the most important
piece of information you got out of
today's presentation?**

