

MEDIA RELEASE

Government of Ontario and Ontario Medical Association arbitration briefs show the gap between government and doctors is wider than ever

Patients continue to hold the most risk as government disregards the value of family doctors

May 6, 2024 (Toronto, Ontario) – The Government of Ontario’s Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) have entered a binding arbitration process on year 1 of the 2024-2028 Physician Services Agreement. The three-day arbitration hearing began this morning in Toronto with a decision expected later in the summer. As part of the arbitration process both sides provided written briefs outlining their positions. The MOH’s brief outlines a deeply inadequate proposal which, if implemented, would further erode the ability of family doctors in Ontario to build viable practices, and continue to put access to family medicine out of reach for a growing number of Ontarians.

Presently, **2.3 million** Ontarians are reported to be without a family doctor – that’s up from 1.8 million in March 2020. If the Government of Ontario gets its way, this number is sure to keep growing.

Statement from Dr. David Barber, Chair, Section on General and Family Practice:

“Family medicine in Ontario is not merely experiencing minor issues that can be easily fixed. We are in a crisis. The Government has known of this for many months and has chosen not to act. Family doctors in practice report unhealthy workloads, stress and burnout. And most troubling of all – millions of Ontarians don’t have a family doctor or any real prospect of getting one. They must rely on a patchwork of ER visits and walk-in clinics, or worse, nothing at all.

The OMA and the MOH both filed briefs outlining their positions for the Physician Services Agreement. The MOH’s Brief shows a remarkable unwillingness to make the changes the system desperately needs. It is more of the same blaming, dismissiveness and under-resourcing that got us into this mess in the first place.

Ontarians need to let their government know that they expect better, and they expect more from the people we’ve elected to lead us.”

OMA and Ministry of Health Arbitration Briefs:

<https://www.oma.org/siteassets/oma/media/pagetree/newsroom/moh-submissions-may-1-2024.pdf>

<https://www.oma.org/siteassets/oma/media/pagetree/newsroom/oma-psa-2024-28-year-1-arbitration-brief.pdf>

About the Section on General & Family Practice

The OMA Section on General & Family Practice (SGFP) represents the 15,000+ general and family practice physicians of Ontario in negotiations and advocacy. Our primary beneficiaries are family, general and focused practice physicians. SGFP also works collaboratively with our primary care partners, patient advocates and all system stakeholders. We believe that we can achieve the goal of a high-performing integrated health system by working together.

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