

## MINISTER EXPANDS PLAN TO ENCOURAGE PHYSICIANS TO MOVE TO UNDERSERVICED COMMUNITIES

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TORONTO Health Minister Jim Wilson and Northern Development and Mines Minister Chris Hodgson today announced further initiatives to help northern and rural communities attract physicians.

"Improving physician distribution is a priority for this government. Several of the reinvestments we've announced since the election have been aimed attacking this problem. These initiatives should further encourage this year's graduating class to practice where they are needed," Wilson said.

The initiatives are:

- community-sponsored contracts, under which physicians can receive annual salaries and benefits to work in remote communities that need one or two physicians. Contracts will be negotiated between the ministry physician and community. Physicians will have the option of signing for one, two or three years.
- a community development officer for Northeastern Ontario to link physicians with communities
- a physician job registry listing communities looking for physicians and physicians interested in moving.

"Northern health care is very important to this government," said Hodgson. "We will continue to work on improving the availability of quality health care."

The ministry is also beginning discussions with Marathon on a fixed funding arrangement or alternative funding plan for the group practice there, Wilson said. Discussions for similar arrangements with Manitowadge, Emo and Simcoe will follow.

"Physicians have been asking for those kinds of alternative funding plans," Wilson added. "Moving away from fee-for-service is the wave of the future. We're working to deliver better funding options to as many physicians as possible."

The initiatives are consistent with recent reports by the Provincial Co-ordinating Committee and Community and Academic Health Science Centre Relations (PCCCAR) and fact-finder Graham Scott, and are in direct response to the requests made by the Professional Association of Internes and Residents (PAIRO).

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