



Ontario College of Family Physicians

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A Chapter of the College of Family Physicians of Canada

June 10, 2016

The Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
80 Grosvenor Street
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2C4

Re: Bill 210, Patients First Act, 2016

Dear Minister Hoskins,

Over the past year, you have asserted on numerous occasions the importance of strong primary care as the foundation of the health system in Ontario. The Ontario College of Family Physicians has been fully supportive of this position and the important role that family physicians play in delivering high quality primary care for Ontarians. Family physicians in Ontario have a unique role unlike any other health care practitioner, providing continuity and comprehensive care across all settings including primary care practices, hospitals, homes and long-term care facilities. For patients and families in Ontario, primary care is their medical home.

The OCFP carefully considered its response to the *Patients First Discussion Paper* you released in December 2015. We encouraged members to participate in early discussions with the Local Health Integration Networks. The OCFP, along with the Ontario Medical Association, were partners with several LHINs in these primary care engagement sessions. We know that it is most productive to be at the table to be informed, and together, work through the challenges facing primary care. We also provided suggestions to your staff and ministry public servants about ways to meaningfully engage with our 10,500 members. Family physician engagement will be critical to enabling the transformative changes proposed. It is fundamental to ensure the complexities of primary care are understood, and that steps to integrate with other parts of the health system are informed by front-line providers. Since your roots are as a family physician, the OCFP hopes that you will appreciate the need for family physicians to be architects in the design and delivery of a high quality and sustainable health system.

It is therefore confusing to see the prescriptive approach to physician micro-management that is proposed in two sections of Bill 210. Section 29 and Section 38 of Bill 210 propose significant amendments related to LHIN oversight of primary care and family physicians. There is no doubt that accurate data about family physicians in active practice, or considering retirement, is needed for effective local health human resources planning. It is equally important to engage family physicians in primary care service planning and performance management. This has been challenging in Ontario for some time. The goal should be to strengthen existing mechanisms for family physicians to continue to deliver excellent care and foster collaboration in their communities. This type of collaboration needs to

be clear in intent through language, or will be seen as intentionally anchored in compliance and monitoring.

A significant contributor to family physician burn-out is the heavy demand for bureaucratic reporting and added administrative burden that take away from direct patient care. This is particularly challenging for the majority of family physicians who do not have access to funded interprofessional health resources. Having these amendments in the proposed legislation seems misguided and better addressed through other mechanisms. It is for these reasons that the OCFP continues to advocate for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ontario Medical Association to reach a negotiated Physician Services Agreement.

We certainly hope that your intention is not to further destabilize the sector through the fundamental changes proposed in the omnibus bill that will undermine our goals for family medicine in primary and secondary care. We strongly encourage you to reconsider Sections 29 and 38 in the proposed legislation as we know there is a better way to reach the same important system outcomes. We will be reaching out to our members to inform our recommendations to improve Bill 210 with proposed amendments through the legislative process.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sarah-Lynn Newbery
President



Ms. Jessica Hill
CEO

CC: Dr. Bob Bell, Deputy Minister
Ms. Nancy Naylor, Associate Deputy Minister
Mr. Tim Hadwen, ADM
Mr. Phil Graham, Director, Primary Health Care
Mr. Jesse Rosenberg, Director of Policy