



PORT COLBORNE

Legislative Services

Municipal Offices: 66 Charlotte Street
Port Colborne, Ontario L3K 3C8 • www.portcolborne.ca

T 905.228.8031 F 905.834.5746

E charlotte.madden@portcolborne.ca

February 27, 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@pc.ola.org

Dear Honourable Doug Ford and Honourable Sylvia Jones:

Re: City of Port Colborne Support the Town of Fort Erie Re: Provincial Election Health Care Advocacy

Please be advised that, at its meeting of February 25, 2025 the Council of The Corporation of the City of Port Colborne supported the resolution from the Town of Fort Erie regarding Provincial Election Health Care Advocacy.

Please find the correspondence attached for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Madden
City Clerk

ec: Niagara Region MPP's

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

Candidates Seeking an Election in Niagara:

info@niagaratinting.com; dumelie.gary@gmail.com;
shafolikapur@ontarioliberal.ca; wayne.gates@ontariondp.ca; contact@ruth-ann.ca;
greenteam@gpo.ca

Rural Ontario Municipal Association
All Ontario Municipalities



Legal and Legislative Services

February 12, 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@pc.ola.org

Honourable and Dear Sir and Madam:

Re: Provincial Election Health Care Advocacy

The Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie at its Special Council meeting of February 11, 2025 passed the following resolution:

Whereas the Town of Fort Erie submitted a letter to the Minister of Health dated August 7, 2024, advocating for the continuation of the Douglas Memorial Urgent Care Centre as a primary care safety net in the community, which has not received a response, and

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 Town of Fort Erie has a population of 36,000 residents, with over 8,000 who are unattached to a primary care physician, demonstrating a need for a primary care safety net locally, and

Whereas the Douglas Memorial Urgent Care Centre provides a first point of contact with our health care system for Niagara residents without a primary care physician, which will continue beyond the opening of the South Niagara Hospital in 2028, and

Whereas the Council for the Town of Fort Erie passed a resolution on October 21, 2024 requesting a continuation of funding for Douglas Memorial operations, without reduction of any funding to Niagara Health for construction and operation of the new South Niagara Hospital, and that the Premier support that resolution, and

../2

Mailing Address:

The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie

1 Municipal Centre Drive, Fort Erie ON L2A 2S6

Office Hours 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Phone: (905) 871-1600 FAX: (905) 871-4022

Web-site: www.forterie.ca

Now, therefore, be it resolved,

That: The Town of Fort Erie Mayor and Council requests a response from the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Health regarding submissions by the Town of Fort Erie, including letter dated August 7, 2024, the Town of Fort Erie Rural Ontario Municipalities Association presentation to the Ministry of Health, Parliamentary Assistant, Anthony Leardi, the resolution passed by the Town Council on October 21, 2024, and the Niagara Health resolution that the Town of Fort Erie presented to the Niagara Health Board on January 28, 2025, and

That: The Town of Fort Erie 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 Town of Fort Erie 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 and the information it references be forwarded to Niagara's local MPPs and all candidates seeking election in Niagara and circulated to the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and all Ontario municipalities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,



Ashlea Carter,
Acting Manager, Legislative Services/Town Clerk

acarter@forterie.ca

AC:dlk

c.c: Niagara Region MPP's wgates-co@ndp.on.ca ; JStevens-CO@ndp.on.ca ; JBurch-QP@ndp.on.ca ;

sam.oosterhoff@pc.ola.org

Candidates Seeking an Election in Niagara info@niagaratinting.com; dumelie.gary@gmail.com;

shafolikapur@ontarioliberal.ca; wayne.gates@ontariondp.ca; contact@ruth-ann.ca; greenteam@gpo.ca

Rural Ontario Municipal Association roma@roma.on.ca

All Ontario Municipalities

Attachments:

The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health Letter – August 7, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier and The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health Letter – October 22, 2024
Rural Ontario Municipalities Association presentation to the Ministry of Health, Parliamentary Assistant, Anthony Leardi –

January 21, 2024

NH Board Resolution – January 28, 2024



Office of the Mayor

WAYNE H. REDEKOP

August 7, 2024

The Honourable Sylvia Jones,
Minister of Health
5th floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
Sylvia.Jones@pc.ola.org

Honourable and Dear Madam:

Re: Urgent Care Centre, Fort Erie

I appreciate the challenges that you and your Ministry face as you endeavour to ensure that every resident of Ontario has timely, effective and meaningful access to primary health care. I also appreciate the interest that you have taken in the specific issues that challenge us in Fort Erie as we attempt to establish a model that will address the need of our residents to access primary care.

The Town of Fort Erie Council recently passed a resolution calling on you and Niagara Health for a commitment to continue the operation of the Urgent Care Centre at Douglas Memorial, in Fort Erie, following the opening of the South Niagara Hospital as our primary care safety net until a viable and sustainable alternative is in place in the community. I attach a copy of that resolution. This resolution has also been supported by the City of Niagara Falls, the City of Port Colborne and the Niagara Region.

The Town administration has been working with local family physicians, other health care providers, Bridges (the local Community Health Centre), the Indigenous community, Niagara Health, the Niagara Ontario Health Team and Ontario Health West to identify the specific service needs of our residents, the resources that we can rely on to meet our residents' needs and establish the model that will ensure that the primary health care, diagnostic and associated services are in place for the long term. As the community continues to grow, the Town is taking necessary steps to ensure that all residents will be rostered with a family physician, including continued support for a local Physician Recruitment Incentive program. As you can imagine, this is a significant investment and a moving target that is elusive for municipalities across Ontario. Fort Erie estimates that over 7,000 residents are unattached to a primary care physician and all of our 34,000 residents rely on the Urgent Care for primary care health issues. Hence the absolute importance of the Urgent Care Centre at Douglas Memorial continue its operation as our primary care safety net.

..../2

Mailing Address:

The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie
1 Municipal Centre Drive, Fort Erie ON L2A 2S6

Office Hours 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Phone: (905) 871-1600 FAX: (905) 871-4022

Web-site: www.forterie.ca

In July 2023, Niagara Health reduced the hours of operation of the UCC in Fort Erie (and Port Colborne) from 24 hours to essentially 10 hours (10 a.m. to 8 p.m.). This has jeopardized the access to primary care not only of unrostered patients, but for all residents of our community after available family physician working hours. The implications seem predictable: greater pressure on the Emergency Departments in Niagara Falls and Welland, lower acuity health issues using Emergency and EMS as a first point of contact, greater demand on Emergency Medical Services and offload delay pressures, delayed medical attention by those with transportation or other logistical challenges which make it difficult to seek medical service at a distance. All of these have financial impacts that erode the ability of the hospital system to provide the services required by residents. I believe that it is unlikely that the new South Niagara hospital will eliminate these concerns.

Insofar as Niagara Health is responsible for the operation of our UCC at Douglas Memorial, we understand the need to maintain a fruitful working relationship with it. Accordingly, NH has participated in our Community Health Care Services Committee and in meetings with other health care providers as we search for the model for primary care that will meet our community's needs. Regretfully, NH has recently decided that it will no longer participate in the committee or any meetings in which the Town of Fort Erie is represented for reasons best known to it. Furthermore, it removed the invitation to Fort Erie's Chief Administrative Officer and Health Services Coordinator to attend a recent meeting (Aug 2nd) with Ministry representatives, Ontario Health West, Niagara Health, the Niagara OHT and other health service partners, without an explanation to the attendees. This was very embarrassing and concerning to us and brings into question NH's ability to gain public trust and confidence as our publicly funded hospital, but more significantly, it raises community concern about its ability to understand the dynamic between operation of the UCC and our quest to find a long-term primary care solution for our residents.

We look forward to your consideration to commit to the continuation of the Urgent Care Centre beyond 2028, as our primary care safety net or until a viable and sustainable alternative is in place.

Yours very truly,



Wayne H. Redekop
Mayor

WHR:dlk

Attach

c.c C. McQueen, Chief Administrative Officer

**Town of Fort Erie - Resolutions
Regular Council**

Agenda Number: 16.2.
Resolution No. 14
Title: Councillor McDermott
Date: Monday, May 27, 2024

Moved by: Councillor McDermott
Seconded by: Councillor Christensen

Whereas Niagara Health has received approval from the Provincial Government to build a new South Niagara Hospital in Niagara Falls that will provide a range of emergency and acute care services, and

Whereas the shortage of primary care physicians in Fort Erie results in over 7,000 residents being unattached (unrostered) to a family physician, and

Whereas the Fort Erie Urgent Care Centre at Niagara Health's Douglas Memorial site provides a primary care "safety net" for the community and serves as a first point of health care contact for both attached and unattached residents who cannot receive time-sensitive primary health care, and

Whereas the Provincial Government is attempting to reduce EMS offload delays and eliminate hallway medicine arising from low acuity patients who would be better served by primary care physicians or an Urgent Care Centre providing access to the primary care "safety net", and

Whereas the viability of the health care and hospital systems in Niagara are dependent on all residents having time-sensitive access to primary health care;

Now therefore be it resolved,

That: The Town of Fort Erie advocate to the Minister of Health and Niagara Health for a commitment to continue the operation of Urgent Care Centre at Douglas Memorial in Fort Erie following the opening of the South Niagara Hospital as the primary care safety net until a viable and sustainable alternative is in place in the community, and further

That: This resolution be sent to the Niagara Region and Niagara's local area municipalities for their support and endorsement.

Carried

Legal and Legislative Services

October 22, 2024

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@pc.ola.org

Honourable and Dear Sir and Madam:

Re: Request Provincial Funding Remain Available to Support Fort Erie's Primary Care Initiative

The Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie at its Council meeting of October 21, 2024 unanimously passed the following resolution:

Whereas the Douglas Memorial Hospital was built primarily with funds left by the estate of William Douglas on his death in 1929; and

Whereas the Douglas Memorial Hospital ("the Hospital") opened for operation in 1931; and

Whereas the Hospital operated in the black during all of its years of operation (1931- 1998) as a full-service hospital under the management and guidance of its own Board of Trustees; and

Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission ("HSRC") recommended in 1998 that Douglas Memorial continue operation as a hospital within the new Niagara Health System ("NHS"), with acute and chronic care beds, emergency and ambulatory services and a range of diagnostics; and

Whereas despite the creation of a standing committee of the NHS Board for Fort Erie, pursuant to recommendation of the HSRC, to assure local input into Board decision making and that no decision to eliminate any inpatient or emergency services would be made unless approved by such standing committee, the NHS embarked on a systematic reduction or elimination of various services at the Hospital until the adoption by the NHS of its "Hospital Improvement Plan" ("HIP") in 2008; and

Whereas pursuant to the HIP the NHS eliminated emergency and all other health care services at the Hospital in 2009, with the exception of a 24-hour Urgent Care Centre ("UCC"), chronic care beds, palliative care beds and some diagnostics, without the approval of the Hospital standing committee; and

../2

Whereas in July 2023 Niagara Health (“NH”), as it is now designated, reduced the hours of operation of the Hospital UCC to 12 hours, although the public only has access to the UCC from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily; and

Whereas NH has recently adopted a 3 hospital model for the future of hospital services in Niagara that intends to completely close the Hospital, resulting in no urgent, chronic or palliative or diagnostic services in Fort Erie once the new South Niagara Hospital is opened in or about 2028; and

Whereas the most recent population data available indicates that Fort Erie’s current population is 36,200, far greater than projected during deliberations with respect to Niagara Region’s new Official Plan, adopted in July 2022; and

Whereas the Niagara Region’s population is growing at a rate far greater than anticipated by the Province or NH, particularly when projections were being made for the hospital needs of South Niagara when planning for the new South Niagara Hospital; and

Whereas there are over 7,000 Fort Erie residents unattached to a primary care physician, necessitating a primary care “safety net”, such as a UCC or alternative to avoid first point of health care contact at local emergency departments; and

Whereas the UCC at Douglas Memorial forms that primary health care “safety net” in the absence of sufficient primary care physicians or service providers in Fort Erie; and
Whereas the removal of UCC services, chronic care beds, palliative care beds and diagnostics from the Hospital will result in an unreasonable and unnecessary hardship for current and future residents of Fort Erie and will foreclose the use of the Hospital as a safety valve for NH patients anywhere in Niagara in the event the new South Niagara Hospital is unable to meet the demands that the increasing population of Niagara will place on it; and
Whereas a prudent approach to managing the hospital and health care needs of Niagara, particularly South Niagara and Fort Erie, would recognize the value of retaining a fully-operational UCC, with diagnostics and clinics, as well as chronic care and palliative care beds at the Hospital; and

Whereas there is no indication that NH has any intention of changing course on its 3 hospital model for Niagara despite requests by the Town of Fort Erie to continue the services available at the Hospital; and

Whereas the residents of Fort Erie need and deserve equitable primary health care services, including 24-hour Urgent Care and associated services;

Now therefore be it resolved,

1. **That** the Council for the Town of Fort Erie requests that the Minister of Health commit to funding all necessary services at the new South Niagara hospital without the removal or reallocation of operational funding from the Douglas Memorial for the UCC and other current health services, and further

2. **That** the Council for the Town of Fort Erie requests that the Minister of Health direct any and all funding from the Province of Ontario for the operation of the UCC (primary care), chronic care beds and palliative care beds, and all diagnostic and associated services at Douglas Memorial remain in Fort Erie for use by Niagara Health as part of a revised hospital model for Niagara or an alternative model operated by a qualified designated health care services entity working in collaboration with the Town of Fort Erie should NH close Douglas Memorial as a hospital site, either before or following the completion and opening of the new South Niagara Hospital, and further
3. **That:** the Mayor and Town of Fort Erie staff enter into discussions with the Minister of Health and Niagara Health and such other health care providers as deemed appropriate to ensure the continued operation of primary care and other current services at Douglas Memorial, with or without the involvement of NH, and further
4. **That:** the Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Doug Ford, be requested to support this initiative, and further
5. **That:** a copy of this Resolution be provided to the Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Doug Ford; the Ontario Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones; the Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Justin Trudeau; the federal Minister of Health, Mark Holland; the four MPPs and MPs who represent Niagara; the Niagara Region and the other 11 local area municipalities in Niagara for support.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Peter Todd,
Manager, Legislative Services / Town Clerk

ptodd@forterie.ca

PT:dlk

cc: The Honourable Justin Trudeau, Premier of Ontario Justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca
The Honourable Mark Holland, Federal Minister of Health mark.holland@parl.gc.ca
Lynn Guerriero, President and CEO, Niagara Health, Lynn.Guerriero@niagarahealth.on.ca
Niagara Region MPP's wgates-co@ndp.on.ca; JStevens-CO@ndp.on.ca; JBurch-QP@ndp.on.ca;
sam.oosterhoff@pc.ola.org
Niagara Region MP's Vance.Badawey@parl.gc.ca; tony.baldinelli@parl.gc.ca; Chris.Bittle@parl.gc.ca;
dean.allison@parl.gc.ca
Niagara Region
Local Area Municipalities

2025 ROMA PRESENTATION
TOWN OF FORT ERIE



Presentation to:
Anthony Leardi, Parliamentary Assistant
to the Minister of Health
January 21, 2025



Overview

- A leader in community Health Care
- Investing in our community
- Community profile
- Our Issue
- Our Challenges
- Current Impacts on access
- How the Province can help
- Progress with Niagara Health
- Indigenous Health Services



■ A Leader in Community Health Care

Community Collaboration

- Creation of a Community Health Care Services Committee with representation from Regional Public Health, Niagara Health System, Primary Care Physicians, Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre (initially established in 2003, first of its kind in Ontario)
- Conversion of former fire hall into medical clinic (underway)

Physician Recruitment

- Promoted establishment of family group practice in clinics
- Secured 4 new physicians in past 5 years – 2 new physicians in 2022/23
- 1 new physician recruitment pending
- Recent policy changes allowing streamlining and credentialing for certified physicians is removing barriers to repatriate or relocate practices to Canada.
- Attended UK/Ireland repatriation recruitment with Niagara Region

Physician Retention

- Facilitating a local family physicians network (Community of Practice)
- For over 20 years have provided physician retention incentives to address planned retirements

Education

- Partnership funding – Rural Medicine Week, Student Assistance Programs, Clerkships

Programs

- Nurse Practitioner, Mental Health, Memory Clinic
- Mobile clinics – Cancer Screening, Dental Services, REACH Mobile Bus



■ Investing in our Community

- Community Health and Wellness has been a Council priority since 1999/2000 and took on critical importance in 2008 when Douglas Memorial Hospital was converted to an Urgent Care Centre.
- Council's 2023 – 2026 Corporate Strategic Plan was unanimously supported with an enhanced focus to secure and enhance essential health care services in Fort Erie when new South Niagara Hospital opens (2028).
- Since 2012, the Town has invested over **\$2.7 million** in health- related services, as well as contributions to the Community Health & Wellness Reserve (**since 2019 - \$885,000**).
- Council committed **\$3 million** to the South Niagara Hospital and **\$150,000** toward Hospice Niagara's 10 bed hospice residence to be built in Fort Erie.



■ A Growing, Diverse Community



- Fort Erie has a population of approximately 36,000 persons. It has the perfect mix of rural and urban settings – a lot of green space but within close proximity to international airports and larger city centres.
- Approximately 5% of our population identifies as Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, Inuit).
- Over 156 new businesses have opened since the start of the pandemic (March 2020)
- Strategically situated on the Canada/USA border, from a trade standpoint, Fort Erie is important as one of North America's busiest gateways. Presently about 14% of all Canada-US trade crosses at Fort Erie with access to a U.S. population of over 44 million within a daily trucking distance, including 9 marine ports of entry/exit.
- From an immigration standpoint, Fort Erie plays an important role in welcoming newcomers, working with many service providers and the Fort Erie Multicultural Centre in providing settlement programs and services.
- Thousands of visitors are attracted to the beautiful sandy beaches in Fort Erie. Our Bay Beach Master Plan improvements make the experience at our most popular beaches even better and accessible. More than 86,000 annual visitors come to the beach and tens of thousands of others come for the boating, fishing, bird-watching and cycling opportunities.
- Fort Erie continues to be identified as a strategic location for investment by Invest Ontario and Niagara Economic Development.



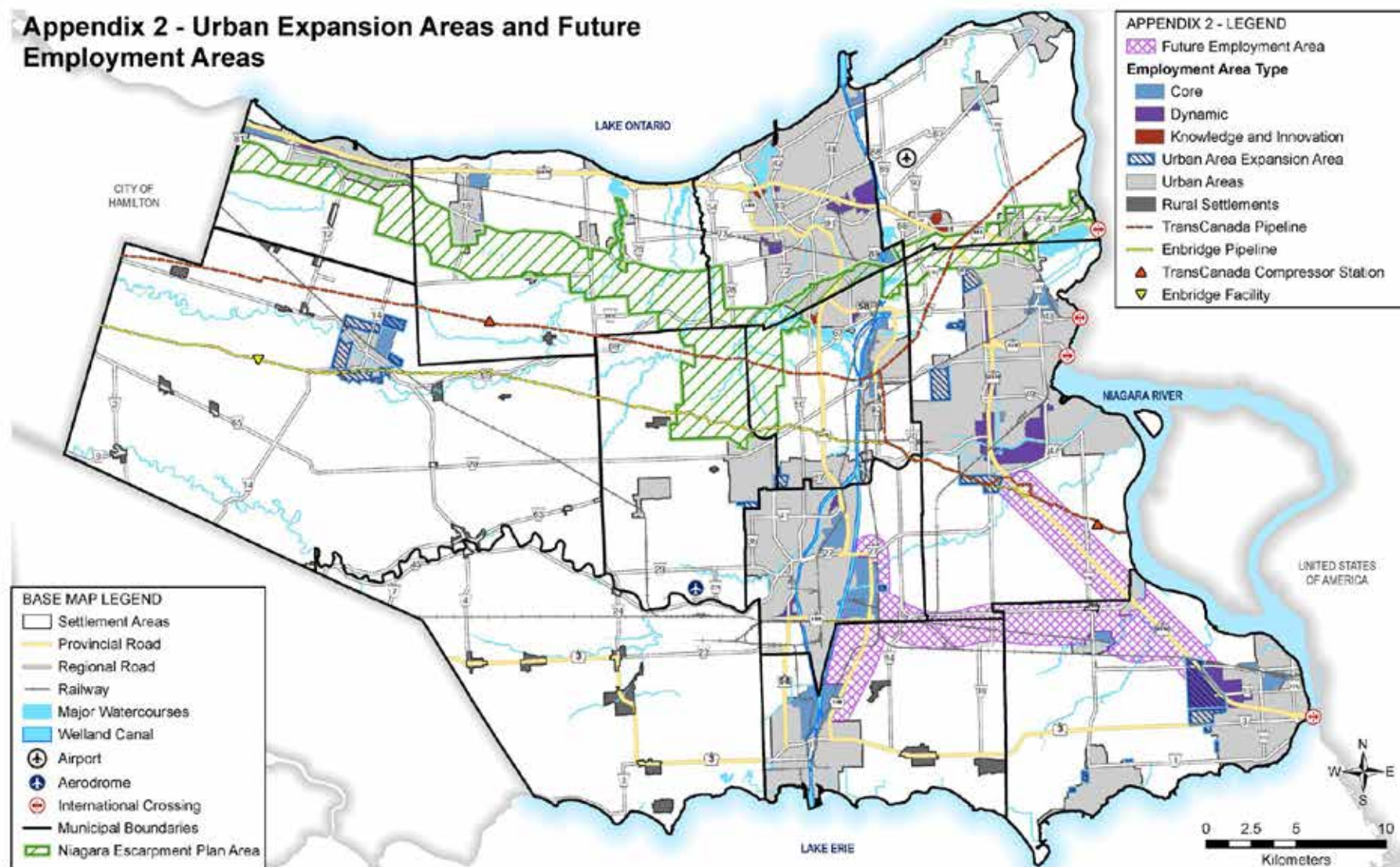
Our Issue:

- Currently, 8,000 Fort Erie residents are not rostered to a family physician in Fort Erie or not receiving care at all. *
- First point of care for unattached and many attached residents is Fort Erie Urgent Care Centre; however, service hours were reduced from 24 hour care to 10 hour care (10 a.m. to 8 p.m.), effective July 5, 2023.
- Fort Erie Urgent Care has served the community as appropriate first point of contact for lower acuity health issues (for both attached and unattached residents - 36,000) and it is considered a primary health care “**safety net**”.
- Niagara Health plans to close the Fort Erie Urgent Care in 2028, with the opening of the new South Niagara Hospital. Without a first point of contact “safety net” for low acuity health conditions, residents will go to the emergency department or call EMS.
- Primary Care was identified as a priority by the province, leading to the appointment of Dr.Philpott to address this issue.

* Ministry of Health Statistics, 2024



Appendix 2 - Urban Expansion Areas and Future Employment Areas



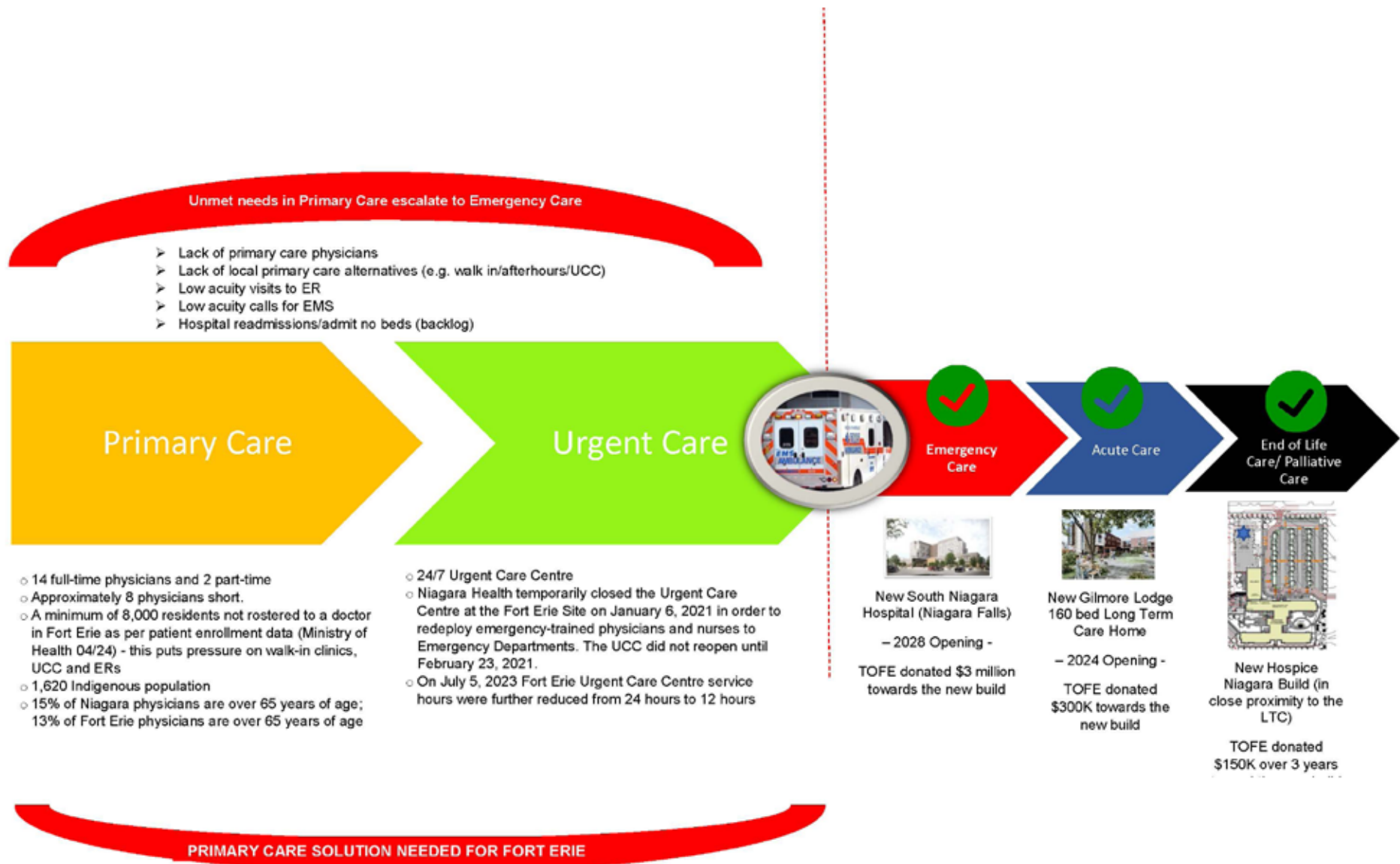
© 2021 Niagara Region and its suppliers. Projection: NAD83, UTM Zone 18N, CRS: NAD83. This map was compiled from various data sources. The Niagara Region makes no representation or warranty, either expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, completeness, reliability, currency or otherwise of the information shown on this map.

■ Our Challenge:

- **Douglas Memorial Urgent Care Centre (UCC) needs to be available 24/7 post 2028 (when South Niagara Hospital opens) OR until an alternate plan to secure primary care services is in place for our growing community.**
- Town is working with local health service partners, Niagara Ontario Health Team, local family physicians and Community Health Centre (CHC) to collaborate on an EOI Interdisciplinary Care Team (ICT) submission as an interim measure to address primary care physician shortages. Fort Erie UCC remains as a critical primary care “safety net” to avoid emergency room crowding.
- Fort Erie is prepared to support Niagara Health as a credible and sustainable health care provider to oversee a local health service solution after 2028. Such a solution breaks down health care silos, facilitates continuity of care, and reduces pressures on hospitals (e.g. ED overcrowding; EMC offload delays) by addressing primary care access in the community.



■ Current Impacts on Access



■ Statement by the Minister

- The release of the “Your Health: a Plan for Connected and Convenient Care” includes a statement by the Minister of Health, as follows:



“Our goal is to make health care more convenient for Ontarians by connecting you to care closer to home ... we will continue to prioritize making it easier for you and your family to connect to the care you need... we are focused on connecting you to the care you need, when and where you need it.”

With the recent appointment of Dr. Philpott, the Minister also added

“There’s no one I trust more than Dr. Philpott with her considerable experience to keep moving us forward and get us across the finish line of connecting everyone in the province to more convenient primary health care within the next five years. Doing so will have enormous benefits for people’s health and wellbeing, as well as the province’s health care system by reducing pressures on emergency departments.”

■ Progress with Niagara Health:

- Niagara Health publicly stated that they are not in the primary care business.
- They confirmed plans to cease operations of the Fort Erie Urgent Care Centre upon the opening of the South Niagara Hospital.
- They plan to allocate primary care spending dollars from Fort Erie Urgent Care Centre to operations at South Niagara Hospital.
- Niagara Health has excluded town staff from local health services discussions and has withdrawn their participation on the Fort Erie Health Services Committee.



■ How the Province can help:

- Request that Niagara Health restore and continue Urgent Care hours/operations in order to provide continued services to our residents and with consideration to meet the primary and incidental health care needs for the growth that our community continues to experience.
- Provide Niagara Health with the required operational funding for the new South Niagara Hospital so that current primary care funding for the UCC remains in our community to address primary care needs.
- Work with Town, Niagara Health, the Indigenous community and local physicians to develop a funded Fort Erie Health Services Model that will provide essential, sustainable and reliable first point of contact primary care health services to all residents (attached and unattached) beyond 2028.



■ How the Province can help:

- Continue to review/update the new practice agreement for family physicians to remove barriers that would discourage a collaborative primary care facility model (e.g. distance between members/clinics, funding caps) and increase incentives or create attractive conditions for family physicians to work after hours at UCCs.
- Address health care as “one envelope” of funding vs. fractured health funding envelopes (primary care, hospitals, EMS, public health, home and community care, etc.)
- Continue to advocate for additional seats on health and medical professional training programs - opportunities for post-secondary training in Fort Erie (FEIA/ Sheridan/Niagara College).



Indigenous Health Services

Challenges:

- Indigenous community and clients already experience access to care issues. The potential closure of the Douglas Memorial Hospital and access to urgent care present more barriers to access.
- Mainstream and conventional models of health services offered through Niagara Health System (NHS) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) do not meet specific needs of Indigenous community and clients.
- Lack of physicians especially those familiar with holistic medicines.
- Lack of addiction services/harm reduction services that align to Indigenous healing journey.
- Child care pressures.
- Housing pressures.
- Transportation accessing programs out of Town is a barrier for many.



Indigenous Health Services

Success with Indigenous-led Services:

- Wellbriety -12 week program based on Medicine Wheel Teachings that connects addiction and recovery services offered at the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre facilitation in circles that begin the healing journey using a holistic approach with a mental health component (Niagara Health System does not provide support for this model). While main stream addiction services is well-intentioned, it can be more dangerous for Indigenous people to participate in these programs and lead to additional health crises.
- Under the Rainbow Childcare Centre is open to all Fort Erie residents and currently has a large wait list due to its popular programming.
- Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre has undertaken training their own ECE workers to compliment the Childcare Centre and Head Start program.
- Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre is represented on the Town's Community Health Care Services Committee and other municipal committees, and brings thoughts and ideas that help plan for the future of the community and Indigenous Health Services.



What the Province can do to help



- Support the Town's request to continue operation of the Urgent Care Centre (UCC) beyond 2028 as a local primary care access for the Indigenous community as part of Fort Erie's primary health care "safety net". The Town's request has also been supported by the Niagara Region, City of Niagara Falls, and City of Port Colborne.
- Encourage the inclusion of the Ministry of Health and Niagara Health System in facilitating health services specific to Indigenous Health.
- Encourage the acceptance of addiction services/harm reduction with more of an Indigenous lens that will assist with the healing journey.
- Consider support for the expansion of child care services at Under the Rainbow, provided through the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre.



Thank you for providing us with this opportunity to share with you the commitment that the Town continues to make in addressing community health care needs and discuss with you the importance of all Fort Erie residents having equitable access to comprehensive, community-based, innovative health care.

Mayor Wayne H. Redekop
Councillor Joan Christensen
Councillor George McDermott
Chris McQueen, Chief Administrative Officer





Proposed Resolution for the Niagara Health Board of Directors

Whereas, the Town of Fort Erie has clearly stated its position that the community requires a primary health care “safety net”, currently provided at the Douglas Memorial Urgent Care Centre, that should responsibly continue operation in Fort Erie until a viable alternative is in place.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that,

That the Niagara Health Board of Directors instruct Niagara Health representatives to re-engage with the Town of Fort Erie Health Services Committee to assist with local health and community service discussions; and

That Niagara Health commit to include the Town of Fort Erie Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, Community Health Services Coordinator and/or Director of Community Services in all discussions regarding local health services that impact the Town of Fort Erie; and

That the Niagara Health Board of Directors advocate to the Minister of Health to commit to the operational funding for all necessary services at the new South Niagara hospital without the removal or reallocation of operational funding from Douglas Memorial Urgent Care Centre (primary care services) to allow the continuation of the UCC and other current health services beyond 2028 or until a sustainable alternative is established; and

That the Niagara Health Board of Directors advocate to the Ministry of Health to direct all existing provincial funding for the operation of the Douglas Memorial UCC (primary care), chronic care beds and palliative care beds, and all diagnostic and associated services to remain in Fort Erie for use by Niagara Health as part of a revised hospital model for Niagara or an alternative model operated by a qualified designated health care services entity working in collaboration with the Town of Fort Erie should Niagara Health close Douglas Memorial as a hospital site, either before or following the completion and opening of the new South Niagara Hospital; and

That the Niagara Health Board notify the Town of Fort Erie of its decisions with respect to the above resolutions.