



# Staff Report

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## Strategic Initiatives – Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives

**Report To:** COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services  
**Meeting Date:** February 3, 2025  
**Report Number:** SI.25.004  
**Title:** Consideration of Family Physician Recruitment Working Group  
**Prepared by:** Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives

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### A. Recommendations

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THAT Council receive Staff Report SI.25.004, entitled “Consideration of Family Physician Recruitment Working Group”;

AND THAT Council endorses the establishment of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group and approves the Terms of Reference as attached to this report;

AND THAT Council appoints (Councillor Name) as the Council lead and as the Chair of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group for the term of the Working Group as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

AND THAT Council direct staff to initiate meetings of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group with representatives from the North East Grey Health Clinics and other Town of The Blue Mountains resident members in accordance with the Terms of Reference and as selected following the Town’s standard Committee selection procedure administered by the Town Clerk.

### B. Overview

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This report seeks Council approval for the creation of a Family Physician Recruitment Working Group (FPRWG) with the mandate of presenting recommendations to Council for consideration and action related to attracting new family physicians to the local community.

### C. Background

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At the September 30, 2024 meeting, Council received a deputation from Robert Johnston and Brian Harkness, Directors of the North East Grey Health Clinic. In response to the deputation, Council passed the following motion:

*THAT Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains receives for information the deputation of Robert Johnston, Director and Brian Harkness, Director, North East Grey Health Clinic Re: Impact of family physician shortage on the Town and recommendations to Council;*

*AND THAT Council endorse the establishment of a Working Group for the purpose of making recommendations to Council regarding physician recruitment and retention and direct staff to initiate bringing a staff report outlining the process including a draft Terms of Reference and a series of meetings;*

*AND THAT Council requests the Finance Department to include an allocation of \$100,000 to the 2025 budget for consideration of Council for physician recruitment and retention.*

*Carried.*

Following the recommendation of the North East Grey Health Clinic and the direction provided by Council, staff researched best practices and drafted the Terms of Reference as attached to this report. The Terms of Reference recommends the creation of a working group to collaboratively develop strategic and solutions-oriented recommendations for Council's consideration.

## **D. Analysis**

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The Town has been active in its efforts to attract new family physicians to the local community. Initiatives to date have included a variety of actions including, but not limited to:

- Delegations to the Ministry of Health at the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA)
- Led the creation and actively participated in the Joint Municipal Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee (JMPRRC)
- Participated in the Rural Ontario Medical Program (ROMP) Rural Resident Retreat and Discovery Week
- Promotion of the Town in the ROMP Community Rotation Guidebook
- Hosted an appreciation dinner at Town Hall in 2023 for Doctor Appreciation Day

Despite best efforts, the lack of a Family Health Team has made attracting new doctors to the community very difficult. To this end, the Town has continued to pursue active advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Health, most recently through a delegation at the ROMA Conference held in mid-January 2025.

### **Family Physician Recruitment Working Group**

Staff supports and welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with the North East Grey Health Clinic and interested resident members through the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group.

The format and general structure of the working group will be similar to the Craigeith Community Working Group and the Lora Bay Working Group. The proposed Terms of Reference recommends that the term of the Working Group be until December 31, 2025. At which point, the Working Group will provide a summary report and if needed, may request an extension of the term and Terms of Reference if required.

As outlined in the Terms of Reference, the meeting frequency will be at least one meeting per month, up to a maximum of fifteen (15) meetings each calendar year. Consistent with other working groups, Town staff will provide general administrative assistance for scheduling, agenda preparation and action item note taking.

A key difference being recommended between the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group and other Working Groups is related to the formalized process of selecting resident members. Unlike other working groups, the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group is not geographically specific in nature. Instead, the focus is to collaborate with residents from throughout the broad community with an interest and/or professional experience related to physician recruitment.

The resident member selection process will be administered by the Town Clerk. A call of interest will be advertised, and applications will be reviewed by Council in a closed-session meeting. The selected applicants will be required to complete a reference/background check in accordance with the Town standard.

The intent of this formal recruitment process is not to burden the Working Group with unnecessary procedures but to ensure that the Working Group participation remains focused and with relevant member experience. Additionally, due to the nature of the discussions that the Working Group may have, the members will be required to adhere to a heightened level of confidentiality.

## **E. Strategic Priorities**

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### **1. Communication and Engagement**

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

## **2. Organizational Excellence**

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

## **3. Community**

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

## **4. Quality of Life**

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

## **F. Environmental Impacts**

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No environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

## **G. Financial Impacts**

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Staff time will be needed to support the Working Group. The proposed staff involvement includes the Director of Strategic Initiatives and on occasion, the Chief Administrative Officer as required. Administrative staff support will also be provided.

Each meeting is estimated to be two hours in length, with a minimum of two Town staff members attending. Based on the proposed meeting frequency of one meeting each month, approximately 48 staff hours will be required to support the Working Group. In addition, an additional two hours of staff time per meeting will be required for administrative duties such as scheduling, agenda preparation and action item tracking. In total, based on the above, the estimated staff time is 72 hours. At a blended and averaged salary rate of \$70.00 per hour, the estimated staff time cost is \$5,040.00.

Additional staff time may be required to support the Working Group, such as research, strategy development and report preparation.

It's important to highlight that this is only an estimate and is based on the full utilization of a two-hour meeting, with one meeting per month (12 per year). The time commitment will vary based on the work and action items of the Working Group.

All action items and recommendations, including those with further financial requirements will be presented by the Working Group to Council.

## **H. In Consultation With**

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None.

## **I. Public Engagement**

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The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives [si@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:si@thebluemountains.ca).

## **J. Attached**

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1. Family Physician Recruitment Working Group - Terms of Reference

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Hendry  
Director of Strategic Initiatives

For more information, please contact:  
Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives  
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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SI.25.004 Consideration of Family Physician Recruitment Working Group.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Terms of Reference.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jan 23, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Tim Hendry - Jan 23, 2025 - 12:17 PM**