



# Family Health Team Expansion & Physician Recruitment



ROMA DELEGATION  
Ministry of Health

JANUARY 2025



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## Message from the Mayor

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Town of The Blue Mountains, I want to thank you for meeting with us at the 2025 ROMA Conference. We are eager to discuss the local healthcare challenges that our community is facing due to difficulty attracting family physicians. From our understanding, a key challenge for doctors interested in our community is that the Town is not served by a Family Health Team. Without the support of a Family Health Team, physicians are reluctant to open a new practice. As the second fastest-growing community in Canada, we would like to share our perspective on how best to address the issue and welcome new doctors to our community. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to a productive discussion.

Best regards,

Andrea Matrosovs

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Matrosovs".

**Mayor, Town of The Blue Mountains**  
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## Summary

### Expansion of the Family Health Team

Attracting family physicians is our top priority. The Town's 2024 Resident Satisfaction Survey ranked physician recruitment as the number one community priority (81%), an increase from 76% reported through the previous resident satisfaction survey.

Over the past two years, the use of the emergency department has increased by over 26% and the number of family physicians needed in the region is now more than 20.

The Town of The Blue Mountains is not served by a Family Health Team. Two established Family Health Teams are nearby, but they do not provide service in The Blue Mountains, with the exception of the Clarksburg Medical Clinic. In addition, there are two Ontario Health Teams nearby, one of which provides no benefit through coverage in the community.

- **South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team**  
Collingwood, Clarksburg, Wasaga Beach and Clearview
- **Georgian Bay Family Health Team**  
Collingwood, Clarksburg, Wasaga Beach and Clearview
- **Grey/Bruce Ontario Health Team**  
Grey and Bruce Counties
- **Owen Sound Family Health Team**  
Owen Sound Area

The Town has spent significant time and effort trying to attract family physicians. Despite best efforts, the lack of a Family Health Team has made the prospect of attracting a new doctor to the community very difficult.

## Family Health Team Expansion & Physician Recruitment

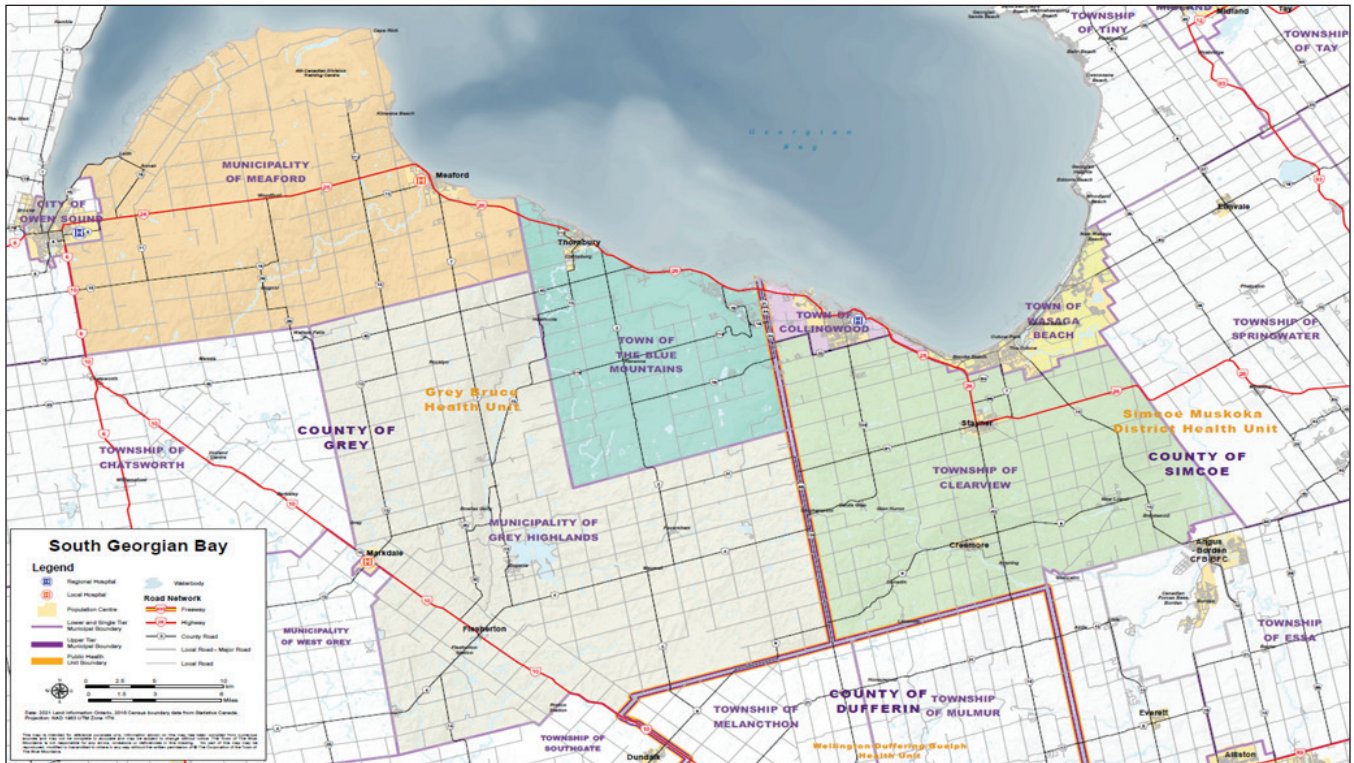
### Our Ask

The Town of The Blue Mountains would like to request that the Ministry provide support for expanding the Owen Sound Family Health Team to the Town of The Blue Mountains.

### Key Messages

The expansion of the Owen Sound Family Health Team will provide the following benefits:

- Increase access to team-based comprehensive care
- Optimized quality, cost-effectiveness, convenience and appropriate access to primary care with reduced wait and travel times for residents
- Enable existing family physicians to increase their roster size as they will have access to nurse practitioners and other allied health service professionals
- Support recruitment efforts for new family physicians
- Reduced local reliance on emergency department visits and very limited after hours clinic availability
- Recruitment efforts would increase the number of family physicians available to support local emergency department coverage and long-term care needs



## LACK OF ACCESS TO LOCAL PRIMARY CARE

**Physician Need:** Recent studies have identified the need for more than 20 new doctors in the South Georgian Bay area, and this number does not account for future population growth. No family physicians are accepting new patients, except in very rare cases. Replacing retiring Family Physicians is not as simple as a 1:1.

**Roster Limitations:** The typical patient roster size makes direct replacement of retiring doctors impractical, complicating healthcare delivery as they exit the system.

**Aging Workforce:** 29% of the family physicians in our region are aged 60 or older, indicating a looming retirement wave. This demographic shift intensifies the challenge of maintaining the healthcare workforce.



## Family Health Team Expansion & Physician Recruitment



### Key Messages - Continued

**Very Limited After-Hours Support:** Our region relies on a single After Hours Clinic for a regional population of 95,000+ residents.

**Geographical Disparity:** Approximately 71% of local residents are registered with family physicians located upwards of three hours away.

**Health Care Connect Hesitancy:** Many residents actively resist de-registering from their current physician to join Health Care Connect to find a local physician due to the unacceptable risk of being without a family physician.

**Stagnant New Physician Recruitment:** For over ten years, no 'net' new family physicians have opened in The Blue Mountains to serve unattached patients. All new doctors have replaced existing doctors.

# Thank You & Future Opportunities

The Town would like to express our gratitude to the Ministry for its attention to understanding the local challenges and the importance of expanding the Owen Sound Family Health Team.

In closing, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Ministry to review the feasibility and considerations of this request.

