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Week recognizes Halton's physicians

Halton Region's Physician Recruitment Program is bringing doctors to Halton—and working hard to keep them here. It's an important initiative, not only for the health of Halton residents, but also for the health of Halton's economy.

Halton residents have first-rate medical care available to them—skilled and dedicated physicians and support staff, four excellent hospitals and numerous walk-in clinics. However, it's no secret that Ontario is facing a shortage of family physicians, and Halton Region is no exception. Two of Halton's four local municipalities, Halton Hills and Milton, are considered "under served" in terms of patient-to-physician ratio.

In a recent speech to the Economic Club of Toronto, Dr. Larry Erlick, President of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA), said: "Whether it was in Peterborough or Chatham, the business and municipal leaders I met shared the same concerns. They were all adamant that the shortage of doctors in Ontario is not only threatening the physical well-being of their people, it is also threatening the economic well-being of their communities."

Halton Region does not take this issue lightly; in 2002, the region introduced its Physician Recruitment Program to address the shortage by attracting family doctors to practise in the Halton community. While the program has been successful in bringing more than 20 family physicians to Halton since its inception, the region recognizes keeping doctors in the Halton community (physician retention) is just as important as recruitment.

Physician Appreciation Week runs from May 17-23, and is a chance for the region and Halton residents to say thank you to the doc-

THE REGION REPORT



Joyce Savoline

tors who already contribute to the health and well being of the Halton community by making it home to their practices.

The week features a networking forum which will give Halton's physicians a chance to meet their peers, members of council and other local dignitaries. It will also provide them with an opportunity to hear a keynote address from a leading member of the medical community, noted oncologist Dr. Robert Buckman.

As a public recognition, physicians from each municipality will be profiled in a special newspaper section reminding residents what a valuable resource Halton's medical community is, and encouraging them to thank their physicians for the excellent care they provide.

Building and maintaining a sufficient physician base is one way the region is working hard to ensure the health of Halton residents—and Halton's economy. If you would like to find out more about Halton Region Physician Recruitment Program, or Physician Appreciation week, contact Angela Sugden Praysner, Physician Recruitment Co-ordinator, at 905-825-6000, toll free at 1-866-4HALTON, or go to www.region.halton.on.ca.

—Joyce Savoline is the chair of Halton Region

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