

# New doctors moved here without government incentives

BY HANNELORE VOLPE  
Staff Writer

Three new doctors' offices have opened in Stouffville despite the fact the community still hasn't received its under-served designation.

Dr. Shehbaz Butt, an anesthesiologist who is a partner in the Stouffville Physiotherapy and Orthopaedic Centre, wanted to locate a practice in the town he calls home.

Main Street physician Dr. Wilson Idami became a doctor in Nigeria, but studied for his Canadian qualifications in Newfoundland.

Family physician Dr. Alkarim Mawani recently opened a Family Health clinic in Success Square.

## DOCTORS FULL

Many Stouffville residents have trouble finding a family physician, particularly with many doctors unable to take on more patients.

Dr. Butt and Dr. Idami came to Stouffville without incentives from any level of government.

To attract more doctors the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville applied to the province for an under-served population designation in April, but is still

waiting for a reply.

The designation makes it possible to give doctors a monetary incentive to attract them to the community. Rural communities are often hardest hit when it comes to attracting doctors.

During her campaign for election in 2003, Mayor Sue Sherban vowed to attract new doctors to town. But she's waiting for the designation before the town actively works to attract physicians here.

One advantage for Stouffville is that several existing doctors' offices have extra office space for future expansion. Doctors prefer to move into existing buildings in towns where other medical services already exist, the mayor said.

Dr. Butt is one of three partners who opened the Stouffville Physiotherapy and Orthopaedic Clinic at 34 Civic Ave. in downtown Stouffville a month ago.

As well as calling Stouffville home for the past two years, Dr. Butt wanted his physiotherapy clinic here to be prepared for the growth coming to Stouffville in the next five years.

"There is a need for

health care in the area and we are hoping to cover some of Uxbridge as well," Dr. Butt said.

He had originally planned to open his centre in Markham, but a colleague at Markham Stouffville Hospital noted there was space available in Stouffville.

The clinic currently offers physiotherapy, massage therapy and custom braces and orthotics. Dr. Butt is planning to include other medical specialties in the near future.

The Stouffville

Physiotherapy and Orthopaedic Clinic's grand opening and open house is slated for Sept. 1. It will give residents a chance to see new technology the clinic uses to analyse muscle and joint movement to better target physiotherapy exercises.

Dr. Idami opened the Health Centre of Stouffville, above the IDA in February and is accepting new and walk in patients.

Dr. Idami became a doctor 14 years ago in Nigeria and came to Canada seven years later. He received his

Canadian qualifications through the skill Assessment and Training Program in Newfoundland, which determined he needed an additional four months of training.

He chose to locate in Stouffville because it is a nice, quiet, family-oriented community. He heard about Stouffville while working with another doctor in Maple.

His office is open from Monday to Saturday, and Friday hours will be lengthened at the beginning of September.



SUE SHERBAN: Town waiting to receive under-served designation before recruiting doctors.



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