

October 2, 2007

Honorable George Smitherman
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Smitherman,

It was a pleasure speaking with you last week about the positive and sustained impact that the Provincial alternative funding plan will have on the ability of physicians to innovate, teach medical trainees and do research at Academic Health Science Centers (AHSC) in Ontario.

On behalf of the AHSC alternative funding plan Governance Chairs, I would like to thank the Government of Ontario for investing 225 million dollars in Academic Medicine. I believe that this investment will greatly assist in achieving the following objectives:

1. Create a stable environment to train physicians who will go on to practice medicine in Ontario. 85% of the physicians who work in Ontario are trained at AHSCs in Ontario. Therefore, a stable environment for AHSC physician educators is necessary to ensure that adequate numbers of physicians are trained in Ontario.
2. Generate innovative health care solutions. Academic physicians are leaders in exploring and identifying new and innovative methods to enhance the delivery of clinical care to patients. Funding to support innovation at AHSCs will further enhance the start-up and ongoing operation of these critical innovation projects.
3. Support research. Through research, physicians can determine why diseases happen and how these diseases may be cured. In addition, the new knowledge generated through research translates directly into new business initiatives that support the economy of Ontario.
4. Promote accountability for health care deliverables. The collection of accurate and up to date information on the delivery of health care services assists in better decision making and increased health care accountability. The accountability framework that will be implemented through the Provincial alternative funding plan will, on a system wide basis, provide significant improvements in reporting and will enable the assessment of clinical and academic services provided by physicians who practice medicine at Ontario's AHSCs.
5. Recruit and retain talented specialists and sub-specialists. The alternative funding plan gives physician practice groups the flexibility to align funding with the complex set of clinical, research and teaching deliverables provided within an AHSC. This funding will serve as a significant retention incentive to current medical staff and will greatly assist in attracting physicians from other countries and Canadian provinces to Ontario's AHSCs.

Thank you for your leadership in supporting the implementation of the Provincial alternative funding plan. Please note that the alternative funding plan process would not have moved forward without the efforts of staff from the Ministry of Health (Bernita Drenth, Susan Fitzpatrick, Sari Teitelbaum and the AHSC AFP Project team), Ontario Medical Association (Stewart Kennedy, Darrel Weinkopf, Robert Lee), the Deans of the Faculties of Medicine in Ontario, representatives of the Teaching Hospitals, the AHSC alternative funding plan Governance Organization Chairs, and Mr. Graham Scott, Chair of the AHSC alternative funding plan Task Force.

I look forward to future discussions with you that will inform the progress and ongoing successes achieved by this important Government initiative, which will directly benefit patients cared for at AHSCs in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Barry Rubin BSc MD CM, PhD, FACS, FRCSC
Chair, Mount Sinai Hospital University Health Network Academic Medical Organization

On behalf of the AHSC alternative funding plan Governance Chairs:

Dr. Chris Morgan (Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre),
Dr. Peter Dent (Hamilton Academic Health Sciences Organization),
Dr. Philip Berger (St. Michael's Hospital),
Dr. Martin Green (The University of Ottawa Heart Institute),
Dr. Gaetan Tardif (Toronto Rehabilitation Institute),
Dr. Stephan Holzappel (Women's College Hospital),
Dr. Michael Gordon (Baycrest Geriatric Health Care System),
Dr. Jean Chouinard (Sisters of Charity at Ottawa Academic Medical Organization),
Dr. Ken Edwards (Queens University),
Dr. Geraint Lewis (The Ottawa Hospital Academic Medical Organization),
Dr. Reguvaran Kunjukrishan (Royal Ottawa Hospital),
Dr. John Brown (Academic Medical Organization of Southwestern Ontario),
Dr. Ian Swayze, (Center for Addiction and Mental Health Medical Association),
Dr. Sharon Whiting (Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Academic Organization).

cc: Dr. Stewart Kennedy, co-Chair PSC, Ontario Medical Association
Mr. Hugh MacLeod, co-Chair PSC, Associate Deputy Minister Health System
Accountability and Performance Division, Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
Ms. Susan Fitzpatrick, Executive Director, Negotiations Health System Accountability and
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Mr. Bernita Drenth, Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
Mr. Jonathan Guss, CEO, Ontario Medical Association
Mr. Graham Scott, McMillan Binch
Mr. Darrel Weinkopf, Ontario Medical Association
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