

## Doctor Recruitment And Retention Program Consultations

March 5, 2010

The Ontario government held consultations on the proposed redesign of doctor recruitment and retention initiatives over the summer of 2009 and included stakeholders, communities and other partners.

The consultations included a series of community consultation sessions. MPP David Oraziatti (Sault Ste Marie) led sessions in Brantford, Drayton, Kitchener, Sault Ste Marie, Windsor, Chatham and Sudbury. MPP Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell) led sessions in Casselman, Brockville, Bradford and Pembroke. There were other sessions, such as in Thunder Bay, that local MPPs organized.

Feedback was also collected through letters, email and a survey on the ministry website. More than 200 written responses were received.

A consultation paper entitled Ontario's New Physician Recruitment and Retention Programs - Bringing the Underserved Area Program Into the 21st Century was posted on the ministry website and offered to consultation session attendees.

Based on what was heard during the consultations, the following recommendations were made by David Oraziatti and Jean-Marc Lalonde for redesigning the doctor recruitment and retention elements of the Underserved Area Program (UAP):

- The UAP needs to return to its original mandate and focus dollars on the most rural and northern communities
- A mechanism is needed to ensure the program is reviewed on a more regular basis (such as every five years)
- Unique doctor recruitment and retention issues pertaining to the north should be well communicated along with implementation of the proposed changes
- Alternative options to address community need for doctors should be well communicated with implementation of the proposed changes, including information about initiatives like Family Health Teams, Nurse Practitioner-led Clinics, Health Care Connect, and the Community Partnership Program of HealthForceOntario's Marketing and Recruitment Agency
- New doctor recruitment and retention incentive fund values available to communities should be well-defined and communicated along with the program change implementation.