



Date: July 8, 2024

To: Mayor and Council

Author: Angela Toole, Acting Manager of Municipal Governance & Clerk

RE: Essex County Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic and Physician Recruitment and Retention Grants

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. That Council **APPROVES** a grant for the Essex County Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic ("ECNPLC") for the provision of Nurse Practitioner services out of the medical clinic located at 273 Main Street East Kingsville, in the total amount of \$35,000.00 to be paid from the Town's Health Care Reserve in monthly installments over a 1-year period, subject to certain conditions;
2. The CAO and Director of Finance/Treasurer **BE AUTHORIZED** to enter into the requisite Grant Agreement with the ECNPLC on behalf of the Town;
3. Council **APPROVES** a grant for the TMC Urgent Care Clinic – Kingsville, to assist in their efforts to recruit and retain physicians to practice out of the medical clinic at 273 Main Street East, Kingsville, in the total amount of \$30,000.00, to be paid from the Town's Health Care Reserve in annual installments of \$6000.00 over a 5-year period, subject to certain conditions;
4. That the CAO and Director of Finance/Treasurer **BE AUTHORIZED** to enter into the requisite Grant Agreement with the TMC Urgent Care Clinic – Kingsville on behalf of the Town; and
5. Council **APPROVES** a policy and practice of not bringing forward for consideration future requests for financial support for medical services or medical practitioners, with an understanding that health care is a provincial responsibility and should be funded and provided to residents without requiring financial support by municipalities which have limited resources and many competing priorities.

BACKGROUND

In March 2020, the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network ("ESC-LHIN") designated Kingsville as an "Area of High Physician Need" due to various factors including Kingsville's rural position in proximity to existing primary care providers and its

diversified population of seniors and Mennonites, and international agricultural workers – groups that are typically unattached to primary care providers. A March 2020 analysis of physician demand found that 23% of Kingsville’s growing population does not have a primary care provider and that primary care provided to Kingsville residents is predominantly provided by the Leamington Family Health Team.

In 2022, the CAO presented a report to Council outlining the primary healthcare access challenges faced by Kingsville residents, and Council directed Administration to request operational funding from the Ministry of Health (“MOH”) for a Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic (“NPLC”) for Kingsville to help address the identified primary care shortfall.

In February 2024, the Town was notified that it had successfully secured operational funding in partnership with the TMC Urgent Care Clinic and Ontario Health Team in the amount of \$424,525.00 for the expansion of the ECNPLC’s existing primary care services into Kingsville. The ECNPLC (Kingsville location) is now temporarily operating out of the TMC Urgent Care Clinic located at 273 Main Street East. The Kingsville location is the ECNPLC’s 4th clinic location in addition to Amherstburg, Windsor (Drouillard), and Essex.

DISCUSSION

Ontario is the first province in Canada to introduce NPLCs as an innovative model for the delivery of comprehensive primary health care. Typically, NPLCs function as interprofessional primary care teams and help to connect vulnerable and marginalized people to a variety of healthcare professionals such as physicians, nurse practitioners, registered and practical nurses, physiotherapists, and social workers who work together to provide timely access to primary care leading to faster diagnosis, treatment and improved health outcomes. NPLCs are important as they have been proven to be effective at relieving the growing pressures faced by emergency departments and walk-in clinics.

In 2023 alone, the ECNPLC saw a total of 9629 individuals of which:

- 4809 patients were visiting for chronic pain issues and management;
- 291 patients were visiting for colon cancer screenings;
- 194 patients were visiting for breast cancer screenings; and,
- 190 patients were visiting for PAP tests.

Further to their effectiveness in relieving pressures on hospitals and walk-in clinics, a recent survey respecting service provision indicates high patient satisfaction: 97% of patients have reported getting an appointment on their preferred date when sick or experiencing health issues, and 98.48% of patients have said they feel involved in decisions about their care and treatment during consultations.

In January 2024, Council adopted its Strategic Plan – A 2040 Vision for Kingsville which identifies “Happy, Healthy Residents” as one of the Town’s four main priorities. The

preceding strategic plans have also identified the need for additional physicians to provide primary care to Kingsville residents. As a result, the previous Council directed Administration to place money into the Town's Health Care Reserves in anticipation of future costs related to the provision of health care services in Kingsville and as such the current balance of the Town's Health Care Reserve is \$65,000.00. Given the identified shortfall of primary care for Kingsville residents, Administration recommends that the Town issue a grant from the Town's Health Care Reserve to help fund the ECNPLC and in exchange, the ECNPLC has committed to register 800 patients to the Kingsville location on or before June 1, 2025.

Further, while the ECNPLC is an important step toward addressing primary care shortfalls, the intent is not to negate the identified need for physicians.

Enticing physicians to practise in smaller communities can be difficult when the physicians have no prior knowledge of the community or incur additional travel expenses. In discussion with TMC Management, they are facing similar challenges in recruiting physicians to practise out of their Kingsville Urgent Care Clinic. To improve resident access to local physicians, Administration recommends issuing a grant from the Town's Health Care Reserve to assist in TMC's recruitment and retention efforts.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Should Council proceed with the Recommended Action, both grants referred to in this report total \$65,000.00 and will fully exhaust the Town's Health Care Reserve. See detailed grant breakdown:

Grant Recipient	Amount	Payment Frequency
ECNPLC	\$35,000.00	Paid in monthly installments over a 1-year period
TMC Urgent Care Clinic	\$30,000.00	Paid in annual installments of \$6000.00 over a 5-year period.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

None noted.

CONSULTATIONS

John Norton, CAO
Ryan McLeod, Director of Finance and Treasurer
Sue Rice, Economic Development and Tourism Officer

PREPARED BY:



Angela Toole
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REVIEWED BY:



John Norton
CAO