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Durham Physician Recruitment Program
Annual Report 2024

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Message from the Director

Durham Physician Recruitment Program – First Annual Report

It is with great pleasure that I present the inaugural Annual Report (2024) of the Durham Physician Recruitment Program. This Report reflects our progress in 2024 and our collective commitment to addressing Durham Region's critical need for family physicians.

With an estimated shortfall of approximately 145 family doctors affecting 180,000 residents, the urgency for a strong recruitment strategy has never been greater. This year, we built a solid foundation by starting the process of integrating our program within the Durham Ontario Health Team, securing regional funding, and fostering key partnerships with Queen's University, Lakeridge Health, and local municipalities.

Key Achievements

- Welcomed 20 new students to the Queen's Lakeridge Health MD Family Medicine Program, strengthening retention efforts and fostering continuity between cohorts.
- Engaged medical residents through targeted support in the QBOL Residency Program, improving local retention rates and ensuring greater integration into the community.
- Expanded external outreach, including national and international recruitment events, to attract Canadian-trained physicians looking to return home and serve their communities.
- Strengthened partnerships with Durham's healthcare institutions, clinics, and primary care networks to create a seamless transition for new recruits.

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2025, our priorities remain clear: strengthening community engagement, enhancing recruitment incentives to remain competitive with other municipalities, and further integrating our efforts within the Durham Ontario Health Team. Additionally, refining our data tracking methods and expanding training and support programs will be crucial to long-term retention.

Physician recruitment is not just about filling vacancies—it's about building a thriving healthcare ecosystem that supports both providers and patients. I extend my deepest gratitude to all our partners, stakeholders, and community members for their ongoing dedication and collaboration. Together, we are building a stronger, healthier Durham for generations to come.

Sheila Hall

Director, Durham Physician Recruitment Program



Executive Summary

The Durham Physician Recruitment Working Group has completed its inaugural year with remarkable progress in establishing foundational structures, fostering key partnerships, and achieving early successes in physician recruitment. This report highlights our **key 2024 accomplishments** across strategic pillars, program performance metrics, and outlines our **strategic priorities for 2025**.

We also would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere gratitude to our stakeholders and contributors who have played a vital role in the success of this initiative. The Region of Durham provided crucial funding and policy support; **Lakeridge Health** contributed in-kind support, including dedicated office space for the Director of Physician Recruitment; **Durham Ontario Health Team (DOHT)** started development for administrative framework that enables program growth; **Queen's University** facilitated medical student engagement and event partnerships; and the volunteer **Durham Physician Recruitment Committee** donated their time and offered strategic guidance and governance support.

Additionally, we thank our external partners, including the **Durham Medical Clinics Network**, **Durham Primary Care Network**, **Lakeridge Health Department of Family and Community Medicine**, **Queen's University Medical School**, **financial institutions**, and **professional services firms**, for their contributions to the medical learners in Durham Region. Their collective efforts have been instrumental in ensuring the program's success and long-term sustainability.

Program Structure and Governance

The program has been designed with a collaborative governance framework to ensure long-term sustainability and success. Key partners have played an integral role in this initiative:

- **Region of Durham:** Secured stable funding through Regional Council approval (January 2024).
- **Lakeridge Health:** Provided in-kind support, including dedicated shared office space in the LHEARN Centre at Lakeridge Health Oshawa Site for the Director of Physician Recruitment, ensuring direct engagement with learners and faculty.
- **Durham Ontario Health Team (DOHT):** To be established as the administrative home for the program, providing autonomy and flexibility for program growth.
- **Queen's University:** Facilitates access to medical students and residents, partnering on key events such as Orientation Week, graduation ceremonies, and ongoing academic engagement.
- **Durham Physician Recruitment Committee:** A volunteer group representing key stakeholders, providing strategic oversight and guidance, developing governance documentation (Terms of Reference, KPIs), and supporting recruitment initiatives and physician tours.



Key Achievements - 2024

Medical Education Programs

Queen's Lakeridge Health MD Family Medicine Program (QLH MDFM)

The **Queen's-Lakeridge Health MD Family Medicine Program** is an innovative initiative designed to address the shortage of family physicians in Ontario. Launched in September 2023, the program welcomed its inaugural class of 20 students, with subsequent cohorts joining each year. Currently, the campus hosts 20 first-year students (Class of 2027) and 20 second-year students (Class of 2028). The program emphasizes early and continuous community engagement, offering students immersive clinical experiences from their first year in various family medicine settings.

To foster a sense of community and support among students in the Durham Region, the Durham Physician Recruitment Program organizes activities during Orientation Week, Graduation, and throughout the semesters, including events that build bonds between the two classes and the community. Regular communication is maintained through email and social media to keep students informed and connected. This approach aims to graduate practice-ready, community-focused physicians equipped to provide comprehensive care to 'feel at home' in the Durham Region.



2027 Cohort taking their Physicians' Pledge (Hippocratic Oath)





2028 Cohort taking their Physicians' Pledge (Hippocratic Oath)

- Welcomed 20 new students (Class of 2028), ensuring full enrollment of 20 second-year students (Class of 2027).
- Class of 2027 -Orientation week minimum of 3 emails to all students; Welcome mixer to all; interaction at LHEARN Centre weekly access; winter holiday season; spring activity (150).
- Class of 2028 - Orientation week minimum of 3 emails to all students; Welcome mixer to all; interaction at LHEARN Centre weekly access; winter holiday season; spring activity (175)
- Implemented structured communications with a minimum of three touchpoints per semester.

Medical Residents – Queen's Bowmanville Oshawa Lakeridge (QBOL) Residency Program

Since its establishment in 2012, **Queens Bowmanville Oshawa Lakeridge Residency Program (QBOL)** has graduated 90 residents, with an estimated 21.1% remaining in the community to establish family practices—providing a baseline for tracking future retention success. This postgraduate Family Medicine Residency Training Program currently hosts 18 residents—9 in their first year and 9 in their second—who are at a critical stage in deciding where and how they will practice medicine.



Given their demanding residency training schedules, our engagement efforts during Orientation Week, Graduation, and mid-semester interactions must be targeted and efficient. Over the past two years, we have analyzed local retention rates as a benchmark, though access to past cohorts has been limited. (55)

The current class has had greater community interaction, offering a better measure of our program's impact, with the true effect likely visible in the graduating class of 2026.

- Maintained contact with the full complement of 18 residents (9 PGY1, 9 PGY2).
- Established a 21.1% baseline retention rate from historical data.
- Implemented a comprehensive support program, including:
 - Orientation week activities
 - Regular academic and wellness support
 - Graduation transition assistance



QBOL Class of 2024 Graduation Dinner



QBOL Class of 2026 Orientation Day August 2024



External Recruitment Initiatives

Domestic Recruitment

Kitchener-Waterloo Event

The purpose of this event is to provide the Kitchener-Waterloo & Area urban and rural family medicine residents with information regarding practice, locum, and potential core rural rotation opportunities across Ontario.

- 35 communities participated
- Generated 13 qualified leads, with strong interest in locum opportunities.



2024 Kitchener Waterloo Residency Recruitment Event

International Recruitment

Dublin Medical Career Fair

The Canadian Society of Physician Recruitment (CASPR), alongside Atlantic Bridge, spearheaded a mission to repatriate Canadian medical students that are training abroad in Ireland. CASPR hosted the expo for its membership to meet, greet and share their knowledge with Canadian medical students that are being internationally educated, to help bring them back to Canada to practice medicine. There were 20 Canadian communities/regions/provinces exhibiting at the expo.

The expo brought in 154 medical students from each of the 6 Irish Medical schools including: University of Galway, University College of Cork, Trinity College Dublin, University of Limerick, RCSI, University of Medicine & Health Sciences and University College of Dublin. Connected with 154 Canadian medical students studying abroad (63.2% from Ontario).

- Generated 55 qualified leads.
- 1 Student is looking to Durham for summer placement opportunities



Manchester Recruitment Event

The Canadian Society of Physician Recruitment (CASPR), alongside Canada Live – Evolve Media Group, spearheaded a mission to engage with practicing UK physicians who are interested in relocating to Canada. CASPR hosted the expo for its membership to meet, greet and share their knowledge and expertise to support physicians in the UK to relocate and practice in Canada.

- Engaged with 98 practice-ready physicians.
- Generated 38 qualified leads
- Achieved two on-site Durham tours.



2024 Dublin Repatriation Expo



2024 Manchester Repatriation Expo

Stakeholder Engagement Achievements

Established partnerships with key organizations to enhance recruitment efforts, including:

- Durham Medical Clinics Network
- Primary Care Transformation Team
- Lakeridge Health Department of Family Medicine
- Queen's University Medical School
- Financial institutions and professional services firms



Performance Metrics

Medical Student Engagement

- Total Students Engaged: 40
- Average Touchpoints per Student: 8
- Student Satisfaction Rating: 4.2/5
- Community Event Participation Rate: 87%

Resident Support

- Total Residents Supported: 18
- Average Touchpoints per Resident: 6
- Program Satisfaction Rating: 3.5/5
- Local Practice Interest Rate: Not Available (tracking process in development)

External Recruitment

- Total Qualified Leads Generated: 110
- Lead Conversion Rate: Not Available
- Site Visit Conversion Rate: 2.5%

Marketing Performance

- Instagram: April 30, 2024, 78 followers, 801 accounts reached.
- LinkedIn: April 30, 2024, 212 followers, 350 impressions, 11.7% engagement rate.
- Email Campaigns: 203 emails sent, 67% open rate.
- Community Events Hosted: 8, Total Attendees: 273.
 - Oshawa Generals 2024 - 18 attendees
 - Community Leadership Dinner - 51 attendees
 - September Mixer (start of new academic year) - 63 attendees
 - Orientation lunch (QBOL) - 9 attendees
 - Orientation reception - 45 attendees
 - Class of 2027 lunch/community promotion - 20 attendees
 - Holiday social - 58 attendees
 - QBOL PGY2 Graduation Dinner - 9 attendees





Class of 2027 - Oshawa Generals Game 2024



Community Leadership Dinner March 2024



Class of 2028 Orientation Week



Community engagement lunch Jan 2024

Financial Overview

The program has remained within budget across key expense categories:

- Medical student support initiatives
 - Resident engagement programs
 - External recruitment activities
 - Marketing and promotional materials
 - Administrative operations
-

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Program Coordination

- Balancing academic schedules with community engagement activities.
- Coordinating across multiple stakeholder groups.
- Managing competing priorities.

Resource Optimization

- Improving private sector engagement.
- Optimizing marketing resource allocation.
- Managing staff capacity effectively.

Information Management

- Standardizing clinic profiles.
- Strengthening data collection processes.
- Enhancing reporting mechanisms.



Looking Ahead: 2025 Priorities

Program Growth

- Expand student and resident support initiatives.
- Enhance external recruitment activities.
- Strengthen stakeholder partnerships.

Operational Excellence

- Streamline administrative processes.
- Optimize resource allocation.
- Enhance data management and reporting systems.

Community Integration

- Deepen private sector partnerships.
- Expand community engagement initiatives.
- Initiated communications with Physician leads in Clarington, Oshawa, Whitby, Ajax, Pickering, Scugog, Uxbridge and Brock.
- Strengthen regional collaboration.

Conclusion

The Durham Physician Recruitment Working Group has successfully laid the foundation for a robust and sustainable recruitment program. Through strategic partnerships, targeted recruitment efforts, and comprehensive support programs, the initiative has demonstrated early success in attracting and retaining medical professionals. While challenges remain, our structured approach and measurable achievements provide a solid platform for continued growth.

Moving into 2025, our focus will be on expanding program impact, refining operational efficiencies, and enhancing integration within the broader healthcare landscape of Durham Region.

Together, we are building a healthier future for our communities

