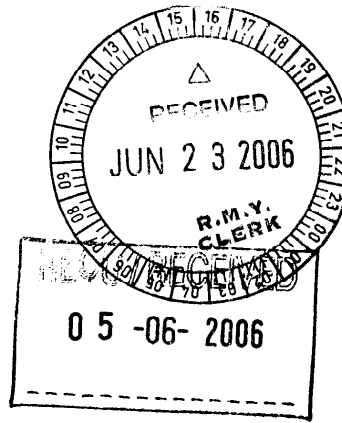


80 COLLEGE STREET, TORONTO, CANADA M5G 2E2

June 1, 2006

Bill Fisch
Regional Chair and CEO
Region of York
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THE
COLLEGE
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AND
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OF
ONTARIO

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Dear Regional Chair and CEO:

A number of municipal councils throughout Ontario have recently passed resolutions regarding improving access to family physicians in Ontario. We would like to take this opportunity to provide you and your fellow Council members with an overview of the actions that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario has been taking to increase the number of licensed physicians in Ontario, as well as convey our 2005 registration statistics.

The core function of the College is to regulate the medical profession in the public interest. This includes ensuring that anyone who receives a license to practise medicine in Ontario has the skills and training to do so safely and effectively. We issue certificates of registration to doctors to allow them to practise medicine, monitor and maintain standards of practice through peer assessment and remediation, investigate complaints against doctors on behalf of the public, and discipline doctors who are guilty of professional misconduct or incompetence.

One of our top priorities for the last few years has been to find creative ways to address the lack of physicians in this province. Past initiatives have included the publication of *Tackling the Doctor Shortage*, a discussion paper providing recommendations directed to government and all stakeholders, including the College, that were designed to increase access to physicians. A copy of the paper is available at: www.cpso.on.ca/Info_physicians/physres.htm. Our initiatives have included working with Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Government of Canada and other partners to develop new pathways for foreign-trained physicians to become licensed to practice medicine in Ontario.

As a result, we have had a number of recent successes as illustrated by our 2005 registration statistics. For example, 2005 marked the second year in a row that the College granted more medical licenses to International Medical Graduates (IMGs) than Ontario medical school graduates. This includes 1,082 certificates issued to IMGs, graduating from 91 different countries. Also, the total number of certificates issued in 2005 was the highest annual total in 20 years. A copy of our 2005 registration statistics is enclosed.

However, we recognize that more work must be done. Our 2004 and preliminary 2005 annual member survey results clearly demonstrate that much greater action and attention by government and other health stakeholders is immediately required to ensure patient access to medical care. The number of general practitioners accepting new patients dropped from 39% in 2000 to 16.5% in 2004. We believe that this percentage has decreased even further in 2005.

To increase the number of physicians in Ontario, we continue to advocate for the government to increase enrolment at Ontario's medical schools and post-graduate training positions. While the government has moved forward on these initiatives, we would like these spots to be further increased to address the future growing health care needs of our population.

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We are also pleased that in 2006, the government allowed IMGs to apply for residency positions in Ontario during their final year of medical school. This included Canadian/Ontarian residents who were studying abroad. We are requesting that this policy is repeated in 2007.

In addition, the launch of *IMG-Ontario*, which provides access to professional practice in Ontario for IMGs who meet the Ontario regulatory requirements, has been a great success. We are requesting that the government continue to support this initiative.

Furthermore, we are pleased of the government's recently announced new health human resources strategy, *HealthForceOntario*. The strategy includes a commitment to repatriate physicians from Ontario who have left to work in other jurisdictions within North America. We are supportive of this direction and look forward to learning more about the specifics of the plan.

Other initiatives that we have been advocating to the provincial government include the creation of a health human resources planning body and the consideration of potential collaborative care models.

We look forward to continuing to working with government and other stakeholders to address these challenges. Moreover, we at the College recognize the important contributions many municipalities are making towards finding creative solutions that meet the unique needs of their communities. We also encourage you to work with government, as we are, to improve patient access to physicians.

On a final note, we are aware that your constituents may contact you to discuss being unable to find a doctor. The College's Doctor Search Service may be able to help. In fact, the College is the only organization in the province that offers this service for members of the public. Doctor Search can be accessed by telephoning (416) 967-2626 or 1-800-268-7096 ext. 626, or by visiting www.cpso.on.ca.

We would greatly appreciate it if you would share this information with your colleagues in your municipal council. We hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,



Dale Mercer, MD, FRCSC
President



Rocco Gerace, MD
Registrar

- c. Hon. George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Brad Sinclair, Chief of Staff to the Minister
Abid Malik, Senior Policy Advisor to the Minister
Dr. Joshua Tepper, ADM, Health Human Resource Strategy Division
Pat Vanini, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario



NEWS RELEASE

College issues most licenses in two decades

For immediate release

February 1, 2006 – The number of certificates of registration (medical licenses) issued in 2005 by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) was the highest number in 20 years. In addition, for the past two years, a greater number of licenses were granted to international medical graduates (IMGs) than Ontario graduates.

“Last year, 39% of licenses were issued to IMGs, compared to only 27% in 1995. Further, IMGs continue to represent 25% of the total CPSO membership,” said College President Dr. Dale Mercer. The CPSO also issued certificates to IMGs who received their medical education from 91 different countries.

“Ontario is beginning to reap the rewards of new CPSO registration policies and programs introduced to increase physician resources,” said Mercer. Since 2002, 523 applicants have been issued practice certificates under these new policies and programs. “We are working from the premise that all solutions must maintain our existing standards of registration,” said Mercer.

“The College is dedicated to doing our part to increase the supply of physicians and challenges others, most particularly the government of Ontario, to do the same. Continuing to reduce barriers to the recruitment, registration, training, and education of doctors in this province is one of our top priorities,” said Mercer.

The College believes that even more action needs to be taken and recommends that the government of Ontario, in its upcoming budget, should:

- Increase domestic capacity further by significantly increasing enrolment at Ontario medical schools;
- Allow Canadian residents studying at international medical schools to apply for residency positions in their final year of medical school;
- Continue to provide the necessary financial support to ensure that every IMG can be fairly assessed, and if eligible, provided with training;
- Market Ontario as a great place for health professionals to work and encourage Ontario physicians practising elsewhere to return;
- Create a health human resources planning body.

“Fully 10% of the CPSO membership is practising outside of Ontario,” said Mercer. The College encourages the government to establish a goal of sustainability of physician human resources as it transforms the health system in Ontario. For more information, see Physician Resource Initiatives on the College website, www.cpso.on.ca, under What’s New.

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“The best quality care for the people of Ontario by the doctors of Ontario”

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Backgrounder: 2005 CPSO Registration Statistics

I. Key Registration Statistics (all classes)

- 2,747 certificates of registration were issued, the second highest number in CPSO history.
- The total number of certificates issued annually has nearly doubled in the past 10 years.
- Of the 31,625 total CPSO membership, 3,228 (10%) are practising in the US or another Canadian province.

Number of certificates issued (all classes) by source of medical degree:

Ontario	1,065	(39%)
Canada	550	(20%) (excludes Ont.)
USA	50	(2%)
International	<u>1,082</u>	(39%)
Total	2,747	

10-YEAR TREND: Number of certificates issued (all classes):

1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
1,556	2,144	2,281	2,402	2,511	2,638	2,747

- For the past two years, more certificates were issued to IMGs than to Ontario graduates.
- 1,082 certificates were issued to IMGs, a 160% increase over the number issued in 1995.
- 39% of all certificates were issued to IMGs compared to 27% in 1995.
- The CPSO issued certificates to IMGs who obtained their medical degrees from medical schools in 91 different countries.
- IMGs represent 25% of the total CPSO membership.

10-YEAR TREND: Number of certificates issued (IMGs):

1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
419	602	750	828	962	1,069	1,082

II. Practice Certificates of Registration

Note: Practice certificates include full independent practice, academic practice, and restricted practice certificates (excludes postgraduate education class).

- 1,156 practice certificates were issued, the highest number since 1993.
- Of the 1,156 practice certificates issued, 82% (952) were full independent practice certificates, the highest number issued since 1993.
- Of the 373 practice certificates issued to IMGs, 215 were full independent practice certificates, the highest number issued since 1991.

Practice certificates issued by source of medical degree:

Ontario	479	(41%)
Canada	282	(24%) (excludes Ont.)
USA	22	(2%)
International	373	(33%)
Total	1,156	

10-YEAR TREND: Number of practice certificates issued:

1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
518	924	973	1,022	1,035	1,111	1,156

III. CPSO Registration Policies

- The CPSO approved the issuance of 523 practice certificates since 2002 under new registration policies and programs introduced to increase physician resources (e.g., Assistant Professor policy, Restricted Registration policy, and Registration Through Practice Assessment program).
- Certificates are generally granted if specified conditions are met, and/or eligible applicants practice under supervision.
- Without these policies and programs, most of the 523 applicants would not have been issued a practice certificate.

Practice certificates approved under CPSO registration policies:

2002	2003	2004	2005
92	118	166	147

IV. Postgraduate Education Certificates

Note: A postgraduate education certificate is the class of license issued after graduation from medical school while the holder is in training, under supervision, in a teaching setting.

- 1,591 postgraduate education certificates were issued, the highest number in CPSO history.
- The number of postgraduate education certificates issued annually has increased every year since 1997.
- The number of postgraduate certificates issued increased by 4% over last year, and 53% over 1995.
- IMGs received 44% of the postgraduate education certificates issued.

Postgraduate education certificates issued by source of medical degree:

Ontario	586	(37%)
Canada	268	(17%) (excludes Ont.)
USA	28	(2%)
International	<u>709</u>	(44%)
Total	1,591	

10-YEAR TREND: Number of postgraduate education certificates issued:						
1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
1,038	1,220	1,308	1,380	1,476	1,527	1,591

V. Issuances to IMGs in 2005, by Country

i. Practice Certificates

IMGs receiving a practice certificate most frequently obtained their medical degree from the following ten countries.

1. India - 44
2. Egypt - 39
3. UK - 32
4. South Africa - 27
5. Pakistan - 19
6. Nigeria - 17
7. Iraq - 14
8. Iran - 11
9. Libya - 11
10. Romania - 11

ii. Postgraduate Certificates

IMGs receiving a postgraduate education certificate most frequently obtained their medical degree from the following ten countries.

1. India - 88
2. Saudi Arabia - 81
3. UK - 42
4. Australia - 36
5. Iran - 34
6. Libya - 30
7. Pakistan - 29
8. Egypt - 27
9. Ireland - 25
10. Germany - 20