



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

EOWC Advocacy Briefing Package

AMO Conference 2022
August 14-17, 2022





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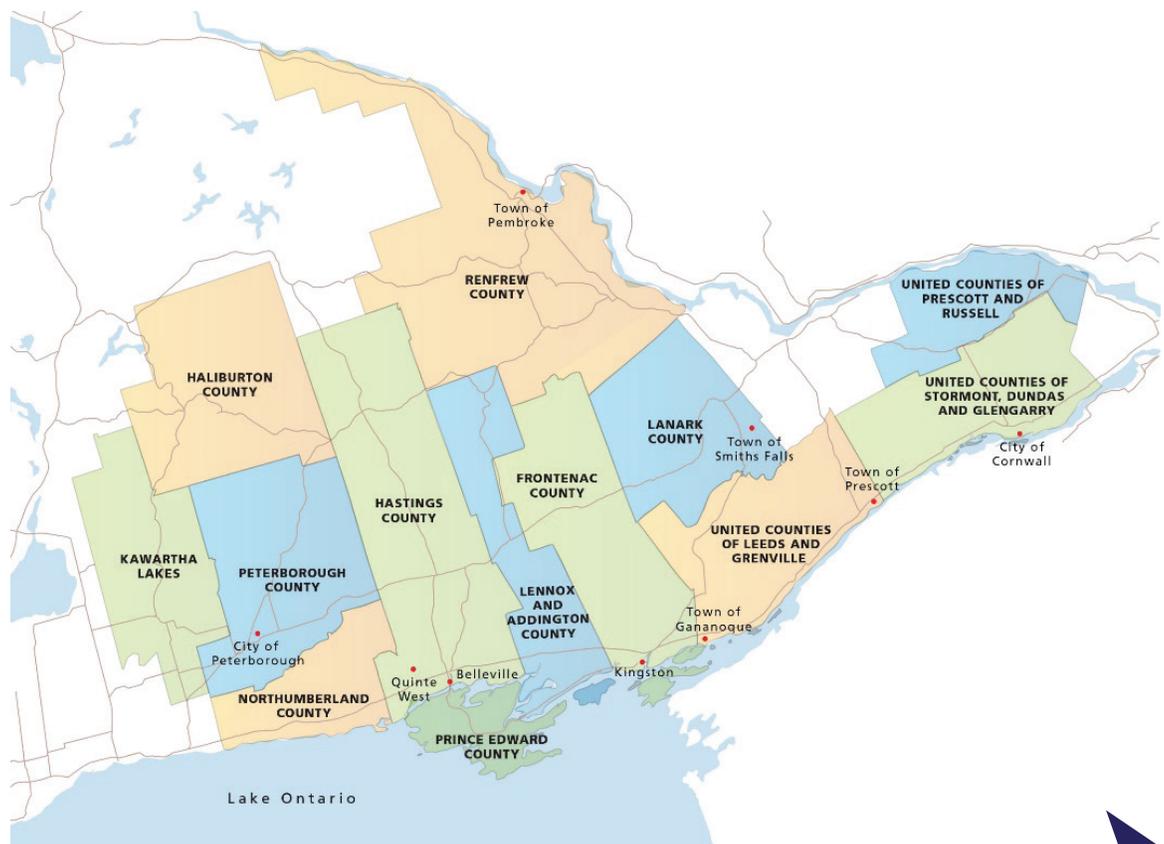
About the EOWC

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) Inc. is an incorporated non-profit organization comprised of the Heads of Council of 13 municipalities (11 upper-tier counties and two single-tier municipalities), as well as 90 lower-tier municipalities across rural eastern Ontario. The EOWC covers an area of 45,000 square kilometres from the City of Cobourg to the Québec border. The EOWC supports and advocates on behalf of property taxpayers and member municipalities across the region. The EOWC has gained support and momentum by speaking with a united voice to champion regional municipal priorities and work with government, business leaders, the media, and the public.

EOWC Members

County of Frontenac
County of Haliburton
County of Hastings
City of Kawartha Lakes
County of Lanark United
Counties of Leeds and Grenville
County of Lennox and Addington

County of Northumberland
County of Peterborough
United Counties of Prescott and Russell
County of Prince Edward
County of Renfrew
United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry





Affordable and Attainable Housing

AMO 2022 Delegation Briefing Note

Issue

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) is committed to work with the Ontario Government to build and support affordable and attainable housing across rural eastern Ontario.

Key Message

The EOWC is motivated to work with provincial staff and continue to foster strong relationships to find solutions that work for rural communities. We are prepared to work together to ensure that provincial tools and programs function in rural communities 'on the ground' to build housing supply across the continuum, such as rent-geared-to-income, family, and seniors housing. The EOWC sees many areas for alignment and partnership based on the Housing Affordability Task Force report recommendations. The EOWC welcomes working with the Ontario Government over the next four years to build housing in rural eastern Ontario to reach the provincial target of 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years. It is imperative to the EOWC that rural communities are included in the Ontario Government's plan to 'get it done' and increase the housing supply.

Attainable Housing

The Rural Housing Information System: Digital Data Tool

In February 2022, the EOWC was awarded **\$1.2 million** from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Housing Supply Challenge funding program to work in partnership with the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) and technology firm, Itery. With this funding, the EOWC and ROI are working to develop a digital data solution tool called 'The Rural Housing Information System' to support the creation of affordable and attainable housing supply in rural eastern Ontario communities. **This digital tool aims to provide local, reliable and current rural data to assist developers, real estate professionals, not-for-profits, and municipalities in the planning and construction of new housing projects.**

At the virtual ROMA conference earlier this year, the EOWC and ROI introduced this proposed new tool, which is being designed for eastern Ontario use but in a way that **can be scaled up quickly to support rural municipalities across Ontario**. Our project technology partner, Itery, is well underway in web development and automated data gathering for the tool.

Throughout the summer of 2022, the process of ‘user acceptance testing’ is taking place. This will give stakeholders a chance to interact with a platform prototype and provide feedback before final development. The prototype tool will be showcased at conferences across rural Ontario during Fall 2022. **The EOWC looks forward to showcasing the new RHIS data tool at the ROMA 2023 Conference.**

More information on the RHIS project can be found [here](#).

Supports for Increasing Housing Supply

Currently, counties across eastern Ontario are working with lower-tier municipalities to speed up approvals, review and streamline services, and bring on e-permitting. The EOWC’s members continue to look for opportunities to be innovative at the local level. Our member municipalities are committed to work with home builders to create a variety of housing stock by identifying land as well as looking at processes to start construction in rural communities. The EOWC shares the Province’s goal in wanting to find land and properties to build or retrofit housing. **The EOWC asks that the Provincial and Federal Governments designate vacant and surplus land and properties across the region toward housing development that municipalities would operate.**

The EOWC commends the Province for merging three programs (Strong Communities, CHPI, and Home for Good) into the Homelessness Prevention Program. Currently, the EOWC continues to review Ontario’s recently adopted legislation, the *More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022*, through a rural-municipal lens. Attainable housing opportunities in rural eastern Ontario remain highly constrained as access to full services is limited, and demand remains within more urban settings where amenities and supports are available. **The EOWC asks the Province to apply a flexible model to all housing funding and programs** to reduce red-tape and help municipalities get funding ‘out the door’ and increase housing projects. **The EOWC also asks that the Ministry of Red-Tape Reduction and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing work together to create a staff contact to act as a ‘concierge’ between the Province and municipalities** to help navigate housing projects and intricacies between ministries toward getting housing projects completed.

Affordable Housing

Project Proposal: Eastern Ontario Regional Housing Network (EORHN)

The EOWC wants to help the Province attain its goal of increasing the housing supply across rural eastern Ontario by developing a ‘made in eastern Ontario’ housing project.

The EOWC is proposing to end community housing wait lists across eastern Ontario through a regional build initiative and contribute to an increased affordable housing supply. Working with the Federal and Provincial Governments, along with the private sector where appropriate, the EOWC intends to have our percentage share of units built to house seniors, families and individuals on our collective community housing wait lists.

This project is an opportunity to pool resources and build capacity and affordable housing supply together across the region. The project would ensure that housing development occurs across rural communities, is long-term and sustainable (e.g., not turn-over in 20 years), and is properly serviced by infrastructure.

The EOWC intends to deliver the full business case of the EORHN proposal to the Province at the ROMA 2023 Conference. As we work to develop this proposal we recognize the need for the Province's support, input and partnership. Therefore, **the EOWC asks that the Ontario Government appoint a staff person in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to set up a meeting after the AMO 2022 Conference with EOWC staff.** This will ensure that the Province and EOWC's directions are aligned and that the project can be a success 'on the ground' in building housing supply in rural eastern Ontario.

Background

EOWC's Regional Housing Summit

In June 2022, the EOWC hosted a regional housing summit that included staff from across eastern Ontario municipalities such as Planners, Housing Service Managers, economic development professionals, Social Service Directors, and Chief Administrative Officers. The purpose of the summit was to share information, collaborate, and identify areas of strength and improvement toward the development of an EOWC regional housing workplan over the next two years and beyond. The outcomes of the housing summit are to continue to inform local, regional and provincial partners on the shared actions and recommendations among municipal staff, stakeholders and the Provincial and Federal Governments.

The EOWC understands that the Province wants municipalities to use the tools and programs already available to them to build housing. During the EOWC's housing summit, municipal staff provided feedback on provincial tools and their impact across rural eastern Ontario. Information on which tools that are not effective in small rural markets was shared. In addition, best practices and solutions were recommended on ways to tweak current tools to improve their impact and reach in rural communities. **The EOWC looks forward to sharing feedback and working closely with provincial staff to ensure tools and programs can be used and implemented in rural eastern Ontario.**



Ontario Health Teams' Governance and Structure

AMO 2022 Delegation Briefing Note

Issue

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) strongly advocates that the Ontario Government ensure municipal representation in the governance model, structure and decision-making of Ontario Health Teams (OHTs). The responsibility to be the voice of our residents in the future direction of community-based health care, including the evolution of OHTs, is a key priority for the EOWC.

Key Messages

The EOWC endeavors to ensure that rural residents have access to the same quality care as their urban counterparts. Across eastern Ontario, OHTs are in various stages of development. Some EOWC members are a partner in an approved OHT; some are involved in the application phase, while others are excluded from the entire process.

The EOWC believes that OHTs are a good concept, and there is no objection to integrated health care with a resident first focus; however, there is an inconsistency in municipalities' engagement with their local OHT and that is of significant concern to our members.

In addition, the funding and the governance models of OHTs require accountable and responsible representation. Specifically, municipalities require a meaningful seat at the senior governance table, given the array of health-related services they provide and the thousands of municipal employees providing these services directly to the public.

The EOWC advocates on behalf of their member municipalities that there must be a meaningful role for municipalities to play in OHT governance, regardless of previous or existing financial relationships with hospitals. The Province should also create a consistent governance model that provides a mechanism to discuss and dispute funding decisions, as required.

The EOWC strongly advocates for the Province to mandate that the leadership of all OHTs must include representation from **each** County or Region within their catchment area. Elected members of municipal councils

have a duty to represent the interests of their ratepayers, by providing oversight for health-related services and are best positioned to make local health-care decisions as they understand the unique challenges that our communities face. They are elected to represent the interests of their taxpayers and communities and, as such, must be at the governance table to participate in these local health and community decisions.

A guiding principle of the EOWC is 'say for pay', where municipalities are required to pay for services, a governance model needs to be in place that allows municipalities to have a say in program development and delivery. OHTs needs to function in a similar manner to the Board of Health where each County and City have a vote. The responsibility to be the voice of our residents in the future direction of community-based health care, including the evolution of OHTs, is a key priority for the EOWC.

It is also critical that both current and future municipal investments in local health care are protected. The OHT model must be designed to protect municipal operating and capital investments into programs they operate such as long-term care, paramedic services and community services.

Municipalities are the only health care agency that is both a taxing and spending authority and OHT funding and programs should respect this unique delivery model. OHT processes will impact funding from upper and single-tier municipalities for direct health care services and social services, as well as influence the way these services are delivered to our residents. Additionally, elected members of municipal councils have a duty to represent the interests of their ratepayers, by providing oversight for health-related services. While direct taxation may not be an issue for an agency with a volunteer Board of Directors, it is of paramount importance to our municipal councils. This process should be transparent and based on a governance model that will allow municipalities to meet their fiduciary duty and responsibilities under the *Municipal Act, 2001*. In short, the EOWC must be confident in a decision-making framework that recognizes the unique role of municipalities.

Background

For more than 150 years, Ontario municipalities have provided their communities with health and community services. EOWC members are critical partners in the delivery of health care and are responsible for co-funding and delivering a number of health-related services that fall under the OHT umbrella, including paramedic services, long-term care, public health, as well as a range of social service supports in the community that are the social determinants of health.

In order to address local needs, EOWC member municipalities also make additional financial contributions above and beyond their required cost-share to hospitals, family health teams/ medical centres, and physician recruitment. Since 2017, EOWC member municipalities have invested ~ \$613M in locally raised tax dollars for health services which equates to approximately \$122.6M per year.

EOWC members have a vested interest in the health care system and strive to shape the best possible care for rural eastern Ontario residents. Municipal governments are innovative and collaborative. Rural communities have always been innovative in deploying health care services,

never more so than during the pandemic. Municipally delivered services such as paramedic services and long-term care have been integral to the collaboration and coordination of the COVID response.

The EOWC remains committed to being the Province's municipal voice and local expert. As co-funders and service delivery agents, EOWC members are strategically positioned at the frontline to provide meaningful input into health care planning and local operations.



Health Care Human Resources / Family Physician Recruitment

AMO 2022 Delegation Briefing Note

Issue

As providers of critical health care services in our communities, the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) is witnessing a strain on the human resource requirements of our Health Care System that is unprecedented. We must address this issue before it spirals out of control.

Key Messages

Across the EOWC's 103 municipalities, hospitals, primary care, long-term care, mental health, paramedics - the list goes on, are struggling to maintain staffing levels required to meet the **needs** of our residents. It is a battle we are all losing.

In rural Ontario, the decades-long family physician shortage shows no sign of improving and continues to fester. Now, we are witnessing the same crisis developing in our hospitals where a lack of nursing staff, hospitalists, specialists, and emergency department personnel are causing massive wait times, patient offload delays, emergency room shutdowns, and over-capacity inpatient demand (hallway medicine).

The historical staffing challenges in the long-term care sector, once invisible, are now publicly exposed. This widespread problem has now become a topic of daily conversation. Additional long-term care beds, while a welcome announcement, **fails** to acknowledge this growing threat to our aging population.

Ontario's health-care system requires an overhaul. Collectively, we as government cannot allow the system's continued decline if we truly have the best interests of our resident as our focus. It is our duty as elected representatives, to find a solution, to be innovative, to thoroughly understand the situation, and begin the system's reformation.

We need short-term and long-term strategies, focusing on the delivery of care, not on 'bricks and mortar' or growing the silos already prevalent in the health care system. **The EOWC supports the Province creating**

additional admission space in family physicians residency programs, as well as other health care positions, to improve the supply of workers across Ontario, but is by no means the only solution.

The EOWC is prepared to support the Provincial Government to move forward with a meaningful province-wide consultation process (task force), with a mandate to investigate innovative solutions already being deployed by municipalities and explore the creation of new ways to provide community-based health care for the people of Ontario.

Background

What happens if we do nothing and wait for the system to fix itself?

For the answer to that question, we need look no further than the health system's own primary care component.

For over 20 years, it has been widely recognized by Ontario's government, that access to primary care services, especially those provided by family physicians, was not available to all residents.

The Northern Rural and Remote Incentive Program, Health Force Ontario, and Health Care Connect, were created in recognition that there is a lack of family physicians in this province. On paper it looked like the province was doing something, but in reality it fell far short.

In eastern Ontario, out of desperation, municipalities started using their local tax dollars to fund family physician recruitment efforts. Offering all forms of enticements, including \$150,000 cheques, municipalities competed against one another for the limited number of family physicians.

For the municipalities with plenty of cash, their efforts paid off in the beginning. Now, money is drying up as pressure mounts to use those tax dollars for the supports and services normally provided by municipalities.

Failure to view the lack of family physicians as a province-wide issue has moved it from a challenge to an all-out crisis with hundreds of thousands of Ontarians without a family doctor or access to any primary care practitioner.

Should we choose to ignore the **overall** state of our health-care sector or take a piecemeal approach to a solution, we are condemning the system and placing the health and wellbeing of our residents in jeopardy.

Together, as partners and community leaders we can do better. The EOWC respectfully asks our Provincial Government to act now; let's work together and make Ontario's Health Care system the envy of Canada.



EOWC's Continued Advocacy Items

AMO 2022 Delegation Briefing Note

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) continues to identify issues of ongoing importance that have been advocated for in the past and that the EOWC will continue to support on an as-needed basis. The AMO 2022 Conference continued priorities include long-term care funding, community paramedicine and COVID-19 municipal recovery.

Long-Term Care Funding

The EOWC has identified long-term care funding as a continued priority item for 2022. Municipalities have continued to step up to support their long-term care home residents, as has been shown throughout the pandemic. The EOWC supports the Province in achieving the four hour model of care and other key initiatives, such as expanding the number of long-term care beds. The EOWC appreciates the province's support for the current long-term care model where residents are provided a final home, rather than a transition-to-hospital or medical institution model.

The EOWC wishes to highlight several issues regarding provincial funding for capital costs related to the construction of new long-term care beds. The EOWC is concerned that the provincial funding will not fully fund the capital costs for projects and will also not compensate for interest or borrowing. Additionally, the EOWC is concerned that provincial funding will adversely affect the borrowing capacity of a municipality and the Annual Repayment Limit (ARL) as prescribed by the Province. The EOWC is also worried that rural municipal homes will be negatively impacted as a result of market segmentation model implemented by the Province. Lastly, the Caucus is concerned provincial funding will not recognize local priorities for resident comfort and other social distancing requirements related to the pandemic. The EOWC looks forward to continuing to work together with the Ontario Government to ensure municipal long-term care homes are safe, efficient and resident-centred.

The EOWC engaged KMPG Consulting Services to conduct an in-depth study of long-term care in eastern Ontario where they reviewed the funding model and costs of redeveloping the Golden Plough Lodge in Northumberland County. The current funding model will cover about half of the total cost of redeveloping 180 beds in Northumberland County. For more information, please visit the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Long-Term Care Capital Construction report (KPMG) on the EOWC [website](#).

Community Paramedicine

The EOWC has identified community paramedicine as a continued priority item for 2022. EOWC members are critical partners in the delivery of health care and endeavor to ensure that rural residents have access to the same care as their urban counterparts.

Paramedic services in eastern Ontario are innovative leaders in community paramedicine and these services have improved overall patient wellness and reduced 9-1-1 calls and repeat hospital admissions. The EOWC is supportive of the [Community Paramedic Policy Framework](#) developed by AMO and the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs (OAPC) and strongly endorses the recommendations outlined in the AMO-OAPC joint paper. Among those recommendations, the EOWC wishes to highlight the necessity of having health care services that are 100 percent provincially funded, and that these costs should not creep onto municipal council budgets. If community paramedicine is to be fully expanded across Ontario to support the health care needs of rural residents, the Ontario Government must fully fund its implementation, as it is primary care in the home and community.

The EOWC continues to call on the Province to ensure permanent, direct and stable funding for community paramedicine programs across eastern Ontario. Additionally, any community paramedic service, should only complement home and community care, not overlap or duplicate, and should not be a substitute for the needed provincial health service or program. The EOWC supports the social determinants of health approach and looks forward to continuing to serve their residents. The EOWC looks forward to work and consult with the Ontario Government on community paramedicine.

COVID-19 Municipal Recovery

The EOWC has identified COVID-19 municipal recovery as a continued priority item for 2022. The EOWC would like to thank the Federal and Provincial Governments for their financial supports throughout the pandemic. The funding has enabled municipalities to address extreme revenue losses and cost increases as a result of COVID-19.

The pandemic forced municipalities to respond quickly making financial, service delivery and infrastructure planning adjustments. While the pandemic situation continues to fluctuate, municipalities still require financial assistance from other orders of governments to continue to provide adequate services to residents and address the wide-ranging impacts that COVID-19 has had on communities. The rise of different variants will require additional support in 2022 and beyond to enable municipalities to rebuild and serve their communities. For example, the continuation of the Social Services Relief funding would enable municipalities to continue providing outreach and supports to vulnerable community members. The EOWC is committed to working collaboratively with the Provincial and Federal Governments through municipal pandemic recovery in the long-term.

Contact the **E**→**OWC**

For general and/or media inquiries, please contact the EOWC at info@eowc.org.

For advocacy follow-up, please contact the Manager of Government Relations and Policy, Meredith Staveley-Watson, by phone at 647-545-8324 or by email at Meredith.Staveley-Watson@eowc.org.

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