

Key Messages for MPPs – February 2019

Elevator Speech

Health systems around the world have learned that health care transformation only works if doctors are involved in the decision-making. Case study after case study has shown this to be true. The people of Ontario know this to be true.

Ontario's doctors are committed to working with government to tackle hallway medicine and improve care for seniors, mental health and palliative care services.

We're are on the frontlines of health care. We know the problems affecting the people in our communities and we have solutions. We need a government that shares the same commitment and we have provided suggestions as part of our pre-budget submission.

We, Ontario doctors, are here because we need to work together with government to help develop effective health care solutions.

Key Messages

Key Message #1: Ontarians trust doctors to make decisions about the future of the health care system.

- Ontarians trust doctors over other health care providers and the government to make decisions to improve health care.
- Health systems around the world have learned health care transformation only works if doctors are involved in the decision-making. Case study after case study has shown this to be true.

Key Message #2: Ontarians not only expect collaboration between doctors and government, they know it's critical to fixing health care. Solving issues like hallway medicine takes a true partnership between doctors and government.

- An overwhelming amount of Ontarians believe that it's important for the government to work with doctors to improve health care in Ontario.
- Ontario doctors are on the frontlines of health care. They know the problems affecting the people in our communities, and they have solutions. We need a government that is committed to working with doctors to improve patient care.
- Asked what advice Ontarians would have to offer Premier Ford regarding how he should manage the relationship with Ontario's doctors, many said that both Premier Ford and the government should listen to doctors, endeavour to better understand the health care system and seek a collaborative solution.

Key Message #3: Doctors interact with the health care system every day and see the issues that affect patient care. Cuts to frontline doctors will not improve patient care or improve the issues facing the health care system.

- Ontarians believe that solving challenges such as long wait times cannot be done if frontline workers are cut. They believed that doctors, nurses, and other frontline workers are essential to good health care.
- If cuts are to be made to the health care system, Ontarians think the cuts should be made to administration. A number of them have said that no cuts should be made to front line staff because that would have a negative impact on service delivery.

Key Message #4: Doctors are not being treated fairly and after six years of cuts and wage freezes, they deserve a fair agreement with the government.

- Doctors in Ontario haven't had a pay increase in six years, meanwhile other public-sector workers have had pay increases since 2012.
- As cost of living increases, funding for physician services has been cut year after year by the government.
- Ontarians think that the decision of an impartial, well-informed third-party arbitrator should be respected if both doctors and government agreed to the arbitration.

Key Message #5: Ontarians support pay increases for doctors. After six years of cuts and wage freezes, people believe it's fair for doctors to be compensated for the expertise and value that they bring to their patients.

- Over half of Ontarians would prefer to see Ontario's doctors receive a modest pay increase. Ontarians believe that everyone should get wage increases at least to commensurate with the increase in the cost of living and find it surprising that doctors have not received a raise in six years.
- Ontarians believe that doctors should be compensated for the cost of their education, as well as their business costs and the lack of benefits. Fair compensation helps to manage the burden of inflation and the inflationary increases in the cost of doing business and employing staff.
- Ontarians believe that physician wages should be competitive to ensure doctors stay in the province. They think that strategies should be implemented to encourage people to become general practitioners, since these doctors are necessary in order to have continuity of care.

Key Message #6: Doctors won't stop advocating for health care systems improvements. We need your help, too.

- For too long, doctors have been working without the meaningful engagement of government and the health system is a mess – underfunded and facing extreme pressures from a growing and aging population.
- Many doctors are active as leaders in their communities and in the province. In December, 1,787 doctors took a stand to publicly condemn the government's efforts to halt arbitration. In just a few days, 5,379 letters were sent to MPPs, not to mention tweets, calls and messages and numerous stories were provided to the press – all to inform the public and reiterate the importance of arbitration in resolving doctor/government relationship.

Key Message about OMA's Pre-budget Submission

Ontario's doctors are calling on the government of Ontario to continue to prioritize health care, specifically for:

- Increased integration of mental health and addictions care across care settings and between Ministries/agencies
- A provincial suicide prevention strategy that is embedded throughout our health and social systems
- Capacity building and realignment of funding for palliative care services
- A rural and remote palliative care strategy
- Better research to understand the system-level causes and effects of physician burnout
- System-level changes to address physician burnout

Key Message about OMA's response to the Premier's Council Report

- The Ontario Medical Association (OMA) welcomes Dr. Rueben Devlin's report.
- We look forward to working with the Premier's Council and the Ford government to improve frontline services in the health care system.
- We support a system that invests in frontline care; prioritizes integration between family medicine, specialists, acute care, long-term care and community and home-based care networks; and leverages technology to better serve patients and their families. The OMA is encouraged that these types of solutions are the foundation of this government's priorities.