

COALITION OF ONTARIO DOCTORS

August 29, 2016

Hon. Dr. Eric Hoskins, MPP
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Hoskins,

Doctors across Ontario read with concern your letter of last Friday to Dr. Virginia Walley, President of the Ontario Medical Association.

We represent thousands of physicians, including family doctors and specialists, across Ontario, from tertiary care academic centres to the smallest rural clinics. Our members, and those who share our views, cast almost 15,000 (14,799) votes against the tentative Physicians Services Agreement which, as you point out, was negotiated ‘under a cloak of confidentiality’ and pressed on the profession in a campaign of misinformation. This was the largest number of votes ever cast in respect of a PSA, a notable event given that the agreement was disclosed without notice and a vote called in the middle of the summer. Shortly after the tentative PSA was disclosed, and in little over 24 hours, over 3,000 physicians from all practice areas across the province signed a petition to compel a general meeting to vote on the tentative PSA, an event that has happened only once before in the history of the OMA. The doctors who rejected the PSA, and the manner in which it was negotiated were not, as you would like to suggest, high paid specialists. Very far from it, in fact. They were a deep geographic and professional cross-section of the profession, including thousands of family physicians. And they rejected it because it was a bad deal for patients and physicians alike.

On August 14, Ontario’s doctors told the Ontario Medical Association and the Government of Ontario that we are tired of the brinkmanship and bullyism that has been the hallmark of this government’s approach to physicians and patient care. We are tired of the relentless bureaucratization of practice, the escalating restriction of clinical autonomy and loss of professional independence embodied in Bill 210. We are tired of the deliberate misinformation about ‘raises’ which ignore inflation, increasing care needs of an aging population and the demands of immigration. We are tired of being told we must ration the care of our patients to absorb the government's lack of fiscal discipline. As professionals who care deeply about the welfare of our patients and the sustainability of our health care system, we expect better from our politicians. While the events of the past six weeks have been difficult, and no one wishes to repeat them, they have also been clarifying.

We urge your Ministry to reflect on the message Ontario’s doctors have sent: we work tirelessly and at great personal sacrifice for the welfare of our patients. We do so under increasingly difficult conditions created by your government including public vilification and unilateral

action. We do not wish to debate these issues here. We would be pleased to have a principled, fact-based, rhetoric-free negotiation towards a fair deal for patients and their doctors cloaked in common sense and respect not confidentiality.

We will work openly and collaboratively as equal partners with the Ontario Medical Association to reach an agreement with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that will fairly serve the patients and physicians of Ontario in pursuit of our common goal of providing the best medical care to the people of Ontario. We hope that you will too and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kulvinder Gill

Dr. Douglas Mark

Dr. David Jacobs

Dr. Sharad Rai

On behalf of the [Coalition of Ontario Doctors](#)