



OPEN LETTER TO ONTARIO SPECIALISTS RE: ONTARIO SPECIALISTS ASSOCIATION

October 14-2018

This is to formally announce the creation of the **Ontario Specialists Association** to represent those specialists who believe their interests and those of their patients would be better served by an organisation focussed on specialist issues. Several sections have communicated their strong support for a specialist organisation following a round of consultations with leaders.

It's clear that a one-size-fits-all organisation no longer works in Ontario.

The decision to create an Ontario Specialists Association has been made. Work on producing draft Charter and Governance documents has begun to reflect the bottom-up approach that so many doctors have sought. While nothing is carved in stone, founding sections will have the opportunity to shape the governance and direction of a specialist entity staying true to the principles of self-determination, fairness, equity and transparency. We encourage you to read these draft documents.

Discussions have occurred at the highest levels in government that confirm support for the self-determination efforts of specialists who care for the sickest and most acutely ill patients across the province. Productive meetings have occurred involving specialist leaders and more are planned.

Other key developments include:

- Corporate lawyers and other advisors are being engaged to formally establish the OSA
- An OSA website will be launched this week at www.specialistsontario.com
- Facebook and Twitter accounts have been created to facilitate communication and organisation.
- FAQ documents will be produced and distributed to all doctors
- Companies have been short-listed to hold a double-authentication and anonymous referendum to determine if 50.1% of a section's membership is committed to joining the OSA
- OSA-sponsored Town Hall teleconferences are planned for each section to discuss and consider the OSA referendum of their specialty members
- A professionally run referendum to permit all interested specialty sections to cast their vote is being planned
- Many other organisational activities are under way

OMA President Nadia Alam has candidly acknowledged the serious issue driving the creation of the OSA and that the OMA Board will not stand in the way of any section wishing to join the new specialist organisation. We are calling on the OMA Board to proactively provide all specialist sections with their membership lists with emails this coming week so that self-determination can occur in a positive and constructive environment.

Why an OSA?

- New options must be considered to meet the unique needs of specialists.
- A decade has passed, and the circumstances of specialists have deteriorated by every metric we can think of.



- Doctors have been repeatedly put on the defensive by an empowered hostile bureaucracy that recognises the vulnerabilities of the status quo and works it to their advantage.
- The recommended relativity model is widely seen to be flawed by all sides within the profession that exacerbates internal professional conflicts and makes a new approach essential. A more focussed organisation like the OSA can undertake the process of repair to yield more productive results.
- A new specialist corporation will happen. It is preferable that it occur through a participatory means with the support of all stakeholders, including government.
- A new and more progressive government has been elected at Queen's Park that has said it is committed to fixing the relationship between government and doctors.
- The new government is aware of the OSA and is seriously monitoring the need to find a partner to bring about change that will be positive for all parties.
- Some specialty sections may prefer to remain with the OMA and that is fine.
- The OSA is the only vehicle that is seen to bring the dramatic renewal and freshness to the discussion; and that has the unmatched ability to take a bold step forward to begin the tremendous task of addressing the needs of specialists and the patients they serve.
- The OSA is committed to working with a progressive government and respectful dialogue.
- OSA is confident that all of the rights that have been secured to date such as binding arbitration will be extended to the OSA.
- Specialists will not have their insurance coverage impacted in any way by joining the OSA. Carriers will not want to interrupt and cannot cancel owner-occupied insurance contracts already in place. In time, the OSA will review the possibility of other benefits for specialists without having costly overhead we now pay for.
- The OSA wants to get each participating specialty's longstanding issues on the front burner for direct government discussion and resolution.
- The OSA is committed to a membership bottom-up approach tied to problem-solving with the new government and to move the needle to secure real accomplishments for Ontario specialists.

The bottom line message is that only by creating an OSA will specialists begin the tough job of fixing the large, unresolved issues of no increases, fee cutbacks, no agreements, disrespect and improving our collective ability to deliver important patient care services in a more stable and respectful environment. If as a specialist you believe this is overdue, choose the OSA to be your representative organisation.

Contact us at: info@specialistsontario.com

Twitter: @SpecialistsON

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