

## Councillor wants Ottawa to develop strategy to attract more doctors

Josh Pringle, April 14 2025



A doctor consults a file in a hospital. (Nathan Denette/The Canadian Press) (The Canadian Press)

An Ottawa councillor wants the city to develop short-term and long-term strategies to attract more physicians to the capital.

Council Stephanie Plante says the Ontario College of Family Physicians has warned that as many as 318,000 Ottawa residents could be without a family doctor by 2026 "if urgent action is not taken."

Plante notes other municipalities have instituted physician recruitment and retention programs, and Ottawa is the only municipality in eastern Ontario that is not a member of the Eastern Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance.

In a motion for Wednesday's council meeting, Plante recommends the Strategic Initiatives staff undertake a scan of what measures other Ontario municipalities are taken to help address the shortage of family doctors, and report back in the summer with short-term and long-term recommendations for a "Physician Recruitment and Retainment Strategy."

The Eastern Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance's website says the group is 16 community physician recruitment programs working together to attract Canadians studying abroad and doctors from the United Kingdom, the United States, Ireland and Australia.

The City of Kingston launched a physician recruitment program in 2022, which includes a \$100,000 incentive to eligible family doctors as well as relocation and career support for incoming physicians and their families. Council approved \$3 million to address the doctor shortage.

A report for Kingston City Council earlier this month showed, since early 2022, the recruitment incentive program has attracted 25 family physicians to the city.

“Of these, eight are net new doctors who have rostered approximately 8,100 previously unattached patients,” the report said, adding 17 new doctors replaced retiring or departing doctors.