

*For Immediate Release:
Friday, March 5th, 2010*

MEDIA RELEASE

Chamber Health Care Recruitment Council Welcomes Province's New Physician Recruitment Programs

Kitchener, ON – The Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce Health Care Recruitment Council has lobbied for a number of years for changes to the Province's physician recruitment programs. Today, the Chamber was pleased to participate in the official announcement given by Kitchener Centre MPP John Milloy at the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine.

As strong advocates for review of the Underserved Area Program (UAP) our Chamber commends the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for initiating a significant review of the UAP and implementing changes to address the current inequities across the province for physician recruitment, said Chamber President and CEO Joan Fisk.

The program changes address inequities in the forty year old program as it is currently structured and create a fairer and more equitable physician recruitment and retention initiative for Ontario communities.

The use of a new rurality index to determine community needs will better serve critically underserved northern and rural communities who will now have enhanced financial incentives to attract and retain family physicians and specialists. This change will put Southern Ontario urban communities, like Kitchener-Waterloo, on a level playing field with other southern communities who previously had been able to offer provincial financial incentives, while K-W had not.

The most significant program change is unrestricted access for all Ontario communities (with the exception of the Toronto area and Ottawa) to International Medical Graduates (IMGs) who have Return of Service obligations.

This will greatly assist the Chamber Health Care Recruitment Council in attracting more family practitioners and our hospitals in attracting specialists to meet the escalating health care requirements of a growing population, said Fisk.

The Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce has been recruiting family physicians for the community since 1998.

-30-

**For further information contact:
Joan Fisk, President & CEO
Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce
(519) 749-6038**