

September 4, 2018

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lisa MacLeod
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services

Hon. Christine Elliott
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

Hon. Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Dear Ministers,

On July 31, 2018, the Ontario Government announced changes to the provincial social assistance program. We are a group of healthcare providers who are deeply concerned about the profound effect these changes will have on the health of the nearly one million people living in poverty in Ontario.

As healthcare providers, we know that income is the most important social factor contributing to health. People experiencing poverty have a shorter life expectancy and are more likely to suffer from mental illness, addiction, cancer, heart disease, and diabetes [1]. Children in low income families are at higher risk of mental health problems, nutritional deficiencies, asthma, and physical injury [2]. Poverty leads to food, shelter, and job insecurity, reduced access to medications and healthcare services, poor health literacy, social exclusion, and exposure to toxic stress - all of which negatively impact health [3]. Despite this hardship, as their healthcare providers, we see that people living in extreme poverty are some of the most resilient members of our society.

In addition to affecting the health of individuals, poverty has major impacts on our health system as a whole. Poverty costs an estimated \$32-38 billion yearly in Ontario [4] due to increased use of health services, justice services, and lost productivity. Investments in poverty reduction can have a major impact on rates of hospitalization, "Hallway Medicine," and wait-times in emergency rooms [5].

The Conservative government is putting the health of Ontarians at risk with the following proposed changes to Ontario's social assistance program:

1. Reducing the upcoming September 2018 social assistance rate increase from 3% to 1.5%, which is below the rate of inflation.

2. Prematurely ending the basic income pilot project.
3. Cancelling regulatory changes that would have created a more client-centered system with fewer barriers.

These changes fall on a social assistance system that is already broken. Social assistance rates are inadequate, keeping recipients below the poverty line. Additionally, the system is dysfunctional, punitive, and is filled with coercive rules and policies that prevent recipients from breaking the cycle of poverty.

The 2018 Liberal budget introduced some promising changes to the system based on the Roadmap for Change [6], a set of recommendations designed by a committee of experts in social assistance and people with lived experience of poverty. The full implementation of these recommendations could make Ontario a world leader in income security by bringing program recipients out of deep poverty and maximizing their ability to work. Additionally, it would set the foundation for a culture of trust, collaboration, and problem-solving; for a program that truly supports recipients.

In 2017, the Liberal government also pursued a basic income pilot. The intention of this project was to scientifically assess the effect of basic income on important outcomes such as physical and mental health, housing stability, and employment in a Canadian context [7]. Nearly 4000 people living in Ontario communities are enrolled in the pilot and are now struggling to find other sources of income and plan their futures as the pilot is being discontinued.

The changes to Ontario's social assistance program that the Conservative government has announced will only further marginalize some of our society's most vulnerable members. Therefore, we call on the Ontario government to take the following actions immediately:

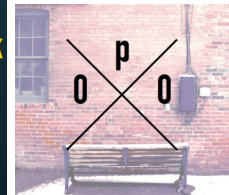
1. Restore the previously planned 3% increase in social assistance rates, recognizing this is only a small step towards bringing people out of deep poverty.
2. Resume the basic income pilot to its completion.
3. Use the planned "100 Day Review" to transform Ontario's social assistance system into one that is fair, just, and treats recipients with dignity, as outlined in the Roadmap for Change [6].

This is a critical moment for Ontario's social assistance program. The decisions that are made now will drastically affect the health of nearly one million people living in poverty, and will place further strain on a system that is already broken. We call on our provincial government to use the "100 Day Review" to build a more compassionate, and effective social assistance program, and thus, a healthier Ontario.

Sincerely,



ONTARIO
PSYCHIATRIC
ASSOCIATION



THE HAMILTON MIDWIVES



OHIP FOR ALL
Healthier Together





Street Nurses Network

Health Providers Against Ontario - Peterborough

Individual Signatories

1. Alissa Tedesco, MD, CCFP, Toronto
2. Jonathon Herriot, BSc, MD, CCFP, Toronto
3. Katie Boone, MD, MBT, Toronto
4. Carolina Jimenez, RN, MPH Student, Toronto
5. Keith Johnstone, MD, CCFP, Toronto
6. Sheniz Eryuzlu, Medical student, St. Catharines
7. Tim O'Shea, MD, Hamilton
8. Llijah Pearce, RN, Toronto
9. Lucy Barker, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
10. Vanessa Redditt, MD, CCFP, Toronto
11. Gary Bloch, MD, CCFP, FCFP, Toronto
12. Lisa Nussey, RM, Hamilton
13. Kathy Hardill, RN (EC), MScN, Peterborough
14. Samantha Green, MD, CCFP, Toronto
15. Jordan Mak, RD, Toronto
16. Alison Sumner, Medical Student, Toronto
17. Fatima Uddin, MD, Regent Park CHC, Toronto
18. Jessica Jacklin, RN, Kingston
19. Jordan Rendell, RN, Kingston
20. Naheed Dosani, MD, CCFP(PC), Toronto
21. Danielle Buell, MD, Toronto
22. Ryan Giroux, MD, Toronto
23. Mike Benusic, MD, CCFP, MPH, Toronto
24. Justin Lam, MD, Toronto, OHIP For All
25. Andrea Perry, OT, Toronto
26. Roxie Danielson, RN, Toronto
27. Jessica Zhang, RN, Toronto
28. Monica Hau, MD, CCFP, FRCPC, Toronto
29. Hannah Friedman, MPH Student, Kingston
30. Reed Siemieniuk, MD, Toronto
31. Eric Fifield, MD, CCFP, Hamilton
32. Ali Damji, MD, Mississauga
33. Benjamin Langer, MD, Sioux Lookout
34. Catherine Oliver, MD, Toronto
35. Amina Jabbar MD, FRCPC, Toronto
36. Shoghi Nikoo, MD, Toronto
37. Asia van Buuren, Medical Student, Toronto
38. Patricia Hoyeck, Medical Student, Toronto
39. Zuzana Betkova, RM, Toronto
40. Dayae Jeong, MD, Toronto
41. Joju Sowemimo, MD, Toronto

42. Katie Dorman, MD, MSc, CCFP, Toronto
43. Sarah DesChamp, RN, Toronto
44. Jennifer Siu, MD, Toronto
45. Sarah Archer, MD, Ottawa
46. Mei Wen, Medical Student, Toronto
47. Hasan Sheikh, CCFP-EM, Toronto
48. Emily-Kate Hunter, RMT, Toronto
49. Neil Arnstead, MD, Toronto
50. Edwin Palmer, MD, Boston
51. James Charbonneau, MD, London
52. Nisha Kansal, Medical Student, Hamilton
53. Rob Fraser, RN, Toronto
54. Yezarni Wynn, Medical Student, Toronto
55. Kristy Colasante, RN, MSc, Toronto
56. Arianne, Cohen, Medical Student, Toronto
57. Kayla Hamilton, Nursing Student, Toronto
58. Chloe Brown, Medical Student, Toronto
59. Michelle Cohen, MD, CCFP, Brighton
60. Kelsey Henry, BHSc, MPH Student, Kingston
61. Gelica Rongo, RN, Toronto
62. Danielle LeMoine, RN, Barrie
63. Elise Jackson, Medical Student, Toronto
64. Rebecca Wallace, MD, CCFP, Toronto
65. Abe Oudshoorn, Assistant Professor, London
66. Timothy Chung, MD, Kingston
67. Daphne Cheung, Medical Student, Toronto
68. Kaiwan Raza, Health Economist, Toronto
69. Laurent St-Martin, MD, Toronto
70. Mathura Karunanithy, MA, Scarborough
71. Kinshuk Kumar, MD, Toronto
72. Nina Nguyen, MD, Ottawa
73. Nishila Mehta, Medical Student, Toronto
74. Jacquelyn Choi, MD, Kawartha Lakes
75. Casey Park, Physician, Hamilton
76. Michaela Beder, Psychiatrist, Toronto
77. Carol Baker-Lai, MPH, Toronto
78. Faiza Majeed, MD, CCFP, Toronto
79. Anjum Sultana, MPH, Toronto
80. Joy Hutchinson, RD, Toronto
81. Ellen Buck-McFadyen, RN, PhD, Campbellford
82. Jodie Pritchard, MD, MPH, Hamilton
83. Ritika Goel, MD, Toronto
84. Jessica Insogna, MSc, MPH Student, Kingston

85. Alpna Munshi, Psychiatrist, Toronto
86. Sarah Griffiths, MD, Toronto
87. Robin Lennox, MD, CCFP, Hamilton
88. Erin, Nolan, MPH Student, Kingston
89. Joy Dawkins, RN, Toronto
90. Abbass Saleh, DMD, Moose Factory
91. Farnoush Harandian, MD, Toronto
92. Carrie Anne Marshall, PhD, OT, London
93. Graham Kasper, Medical Student, Toronto
94. Marc Dagher, MD, CCFP, Toronto
95. Alisha Olsthoorn, MD, Toronto
96. Rorri Bostock, RN, Kingston
97. Cheryl Eadie, RSW, Toronto
98. Ruth Chiu, MD, Kingston
99. Bill O'Leary, MSW, RSW, PhD(c), Toronto
100. Sarah Reynolds, RN, Toronto
101. Leigh Chapman, RN, PhD(c), Toronto
102. Maxwell Tran, Medical Student, Toronto
103. Julian Gitelman, MD, Toronto
104. Natalie Gdyczynski, RN, North York
105. Stephanie Lapinsky, MD, Toronto
106. Mylini Saposan, Medical Student, Toronto
107. Kealin Wong, MD, Toronto
108. Yipeng Ge, BHSc, Ottawa
109. Inna Berditchevskaia, Medical Student, Toronto
110. Lauren Mitsuki, MD, CCFP, Toronto
111. Tracy Franklin, RM, Toronto
112. Lisa Brown, MD, Hamilton
113. Rachel Beretta, MD, London
114. Christine Barta, MSW, RSW, Toronto
115. Sophie Bourgeois, MD, Toronto
116. Kristel Guthrie, RN, Toronto
117. Matthew Sheppard MD, FRCPC, Toronto
118. Sarah Follett, MD, CCFP, Toronto
119. Anne Egger, Nurse Practitioner, Toronto
120. Kathryn Stock, Medical Student, Kingston
121. Charlotte Hunter, MD, CCFP, Toronto
122. Erica Shenfeld, Medical Student, Toronto
123. Noam Lapid, RN, Toronto
124. Alison Green, Medical Student, Toronto
125. Sonia Igboanugo, BHSc Student, Whitby
126. Anisha Mahajan, RD, Toronto
127. Melissa Yu, MD, Toronto

128. Debbie Rudman PhD, OT, London
129. Alison Charlebois, MD, CCFP, Toronto
130. Luke Swenson, MD, PhD, Toronto
131. Deborah Pink, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
132. Shiyang Ding, MD, Toronto
133. Megan Tedesco, Support Worker, Sault Ste Marie
134. Justine Reid, MPH Student, Kingston, ON
135. Sonja Babovic, MD, Toronto
136. Melini Gupta, MD, CCFP, Ottawa
137. Edan Thomas, RM, Toronto
138. Yi wei Hu, MD, CCFP, Kincardine
139. Erin Ashe, RN, Toronto
140. Jason Steiner, MSc Ed, Toronto
141. Jasmine Waslowski, Medical Student, Toronto
142. Enisa Zildzic, MD, CCFP, Mississauga
143. Caroline Jeon, MD, CCFP, Toronto
144. Stephanie Kay, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
145. Jackie Bellaire, MD, Toronto
146. Peter Tzakas, MD, Toronto
147. Evan Batten, Medical Student, Toronto
148. Lisa Wright, PhD(c), Ottawa
149. Roshion Sabeeha Ishaque, Medical Student, Toronto
150. Conchita Fonseca, MD, Ottawa
151. Sarah Giles, MD, CCFP(EM), FCFP, Ottawa
152. Louisa Huband, MD, CCFP, Toronto
153. Christina Reppas, MD, Hamilton
154. Marcella Jones, MD, MPH, Toronto
155. Dan Gorecki, MPH Student, Kingston
156. Fatemah Habib, Medical Student, Toronto
157. Amanda Wang, MD, Victoria
158. Victoria Reedman, MD Student, Toronto
159. Ramona Joshi, MD, Toronto
160. Mary Thomas, MBBS, CCFP, Toronto
161. Richard Carmichael, MD, Toronto
162. Simon Oczkowski, MD, Hamilton
163. Emily Gillard, RM, Hamilton
164. Alyssa Louis, MD, Toronto
165. Catherine Bush, RM, Hamilton
166. Harrison Banner, MD, FRCSC, Toronto
167. Shannon, Taylor, Midwife, Hamilton
168. Liz Darling, RM, Hamilton
169. Carolina Vidal, MD, MSc, FRCPC, PhD, Toronto
170. Jesse Bauman, Medical Student, Hamilton

171. Fatima Mussa, MPH, Mississauga
172. Laura Stratton, MD, Toronto
173. Michael Kruse, MD Student, Hamilton
174. Laura Muldoon, MD, MPH, FCFP, Ottawa
175. Erica Roebbelen, MD, Hamilton
176. Heather Thomson, RN, PhD, Toronto
177. Keyna Bracken, MD, CCFP, Hamilton
178. Archie Zhang, Medical Student, St. Catharines
179. Elisabeth Boulanger, RM, Hamilton
180. Ian Chan, MD, MPH, London
181. Catherine Yu, Family Physician, Toronto
182. Maher El-Masri, Professor, Windsor
183. Hallie Streith, Nurse Practitioner, Hamilton
184. Adam Busch, RSW, MSW, Toronto
185. Sarah Kimber, Medical Student, Hamilton
186. Melissa Li, MD, CCFP, Toronto
187. Ania Van Meer, MD, FRCPC, Hamilton
188. Diana R. Ahmed, MD, FCFP, Hamilton
189. Haider Saeed, MD, Hamilton
190. Sophia Kehler, RM, Toronto
191. Kate Baldwin, Nursing Student, Toronto
192. Alison Mckeown, RN, Hamilton
193. Diana Chard, RD, Belleville
194. Elizabeth Merlos, Harm Reduction Program Lead, Toronto
195. Nancy Sinclair , RN, Cambridge
196. Joanna Dowdell, MPH Student, Toronto
197. Matt Kerslake, Medical Student, Hamilton
198. Melanie Penner, MD, Toronto
199. Jacqueline Vincent, Medical Student, Kitchener
200. Torrance Oravec, MD, Hamilton
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202. Rahat Hossain, MD, Toronto
203. Jennifer Bryan , MD, Toronto
204. Stephanie Sarmiento, RN, Toronto
205. Shirin Aghili, RM, Hamilton
206. Debra Phelps, RN, Toronto
207. Keri MacFarlane, MSW, Sioux Lookout
208. Emily Evans, Medical Student, Ottawa
209. Brigit Desjardins, Medical Student, Ottawa
210. Elliot Grady, Medical Student, St. Catharines
211. Matt Baron, MD, CCFP, Toronto
212. Samuel Wilson, BSc, Ottawa
213. Jamie Ghossein, BSc, Ottawa

214. Farriss Blaskovits, MSc, Medical Student, Ottawa
215. Nova Zhao, Medical Student, Kitchener
216. Carlee Giffen, RN, Aurora
217. Victoria Lanoë, Medical Student, Ottawa
218. Brian Laight, MD/PhD Student, Kingston
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222. Stephanie Amey, Nurse, Kingston
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230. Christine Mills, RD, MPH, PhD Student, Kingston
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235. Alex Wong, Pharmacy Student, Waterloo
236. Wasimuddin Syed, Medical Student, Kingston
237. Kelly Ferguson, RD, Woodstock
238. Kai Ip Wong, MPH Student, Toronto
239. Xixi Gong, MD, Hamilton
240. Benjamin Trepanier, MD, CCFP, C.ISAM, Toronto
241. Tyler Pitre, Medical Student, Kitchener
242. Sarah Stonehocker, MD, CCFP(EM), Toronto
243. Chetan Mehta, MD, CCFP, Toronto
244. Madeline McDonald, Medical Student, Toronto
245. Evan Wilson, MD, Hamilton
246. Erina Shi, RN, Toronto
247. Brianne Bell, RD, Toronto
248. Brenda Copps, MD, CCFP, Hamilton
249. Adrian Rocci, MD, Hamilton
250. Chika Oriuwa, Medical Student, Toronto
251. Jennifer Hulme, MD, MPH, CCFP-EM, Toronto, UHN
252. Riley DeForest, RD, Ottawa
253. Isaac Siemens, MD, CCFP(PC), Toronto
254. Avri Lynn Ding, BHSc, Medical Student, Kingston
255. Colin Siu, MD, Toronto
256. Natalie Ramsay, MD, Grimsby

257. Liza Luu, RD, Toronto
258. Alisha Kapur, MD Student, Vaughan
259. Elizabeth Guete, MSW, Toronto
260. Rachel Morgan, RD, East Gwillimbury
261. Anneke Hobson, RD, Kingston
262. Michael Kirlew, Physician, Sioux Lookout
263. Lindsay Zalot, RD, Burlington
264. Jessica Hrgetic, RD, Kingston
265. Trevor Robinson, Medical Student, Kingston
266. Andrea Hunter, MD, Hamilton
267. Connie Fetterly, RM, Hamilton
268. Mats Junek, MD, Oakville
269. Laura Goyette, RD, Caledonia
270. Rachel Hicks, RD, Toronto
271. Kim Loupos, RD, London
272. Janet Krulewitz, MD, CCFP, FCFP, Toronto
273. Michael Hart-Matyas, MD, Toronto
274. Patricia Desrochers, RD, Kingston
275. Catherine Schwartz, RD/MSc, Arnprior
276. Sarah Anderson, RM, Guelph
277. Edward Xie, MD, CCFP(EM), Toronto
278. Lesley Macaskill, RD, London
279. Sean McIntosh, Medical Student, St. Catharines
280. Melodie Bowes, RD, Kingston
281. Ivan Ho, RDM Thunder Bay
282. Jennine Seaman, RD, Belleville
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286. Meara Tubman-Broeren, Medical Student, Hamilton
287. Ioana Stochitoui, Medical Student, Ottawa
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289. Chloe W., RSW, Toronto
290. Yotakahron Jonathan, Medical Student, Ohsweken
291. Natalie Raso, MD, Hamilton
292. Sana Gill, Medical Student, Ottawa
293. Amanda Rosenblum, MD, CCFP(PC), Toronto
294. Connie VanBellinghen, RD, Sarnia
295. Jen Yates, RD, Dundas
296. Elise Yoon, MSW, RSW, Toronto
297. Zahra Jaffer, MBChB, CCFP, Moose Factory
298. Louis Huynh, Medical Student, Kingston
299. Kendra Patrick, RD, North Bay

300. Eve Clancy-Brown, RN, Toronto
301. Melanie Spence, RN, Toronto
302. Daniel Levin, Medical Student, St. Catharines
303. Lesley Barron, MD, Limehouse
304. Gregory Silverman, MD, MSc, FRCPC, Toronto
305. Alexander Cormier, Medical Student, Kingston
306. Alison Walker, RD, Belleville
307. Christopher Wituik, RN, Hamilton
308. Beth Jolley, MD, Hamilton
309. Jacob Salituri, MD, CCFP, Hamilton
310. Ilan Shahin, MD, Toronto
311. Rachael Mather, RD, Kingston
312. Fiona Young, MD, PhD, FRCSC, Ottawa
313. Elisa Kantor, RSW, MSW, Toronto
314. Katie Cheliak, Medical Student, Hamilton
315. Giovanna Sirianni, MD, CCFP (PC), FCFP, Toronto
316. Kara Hounsell, Medical Student, Toronto
317. Colleen McGrath, PhD, London
318. Zachary Gowanlock, MD, Hamilton
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320. Kat Butler, Medical Student, Hamilton
321. Gabrielle Helal, RD, Moose Factory
322. Jenny Hoang Nguyen, Medical Student, Toronto
323. Lori Regenstreif, MD, Hamilton
324. Lauren Kielstra, MD, Brantford
325. Laura Needham, RD, Owen Sound
326. Jesse Guscott, MD, CFPC(FPA), Collingwood
327. Lonnie Pyne, MD, Hamilton
328. Leila Malone, MSW, RSW, Toronto
329. Frank Vona, MD, Hamilton
330. Jesse Knight, MAsc, Toronto
331. Miriam Garfinkle, MD, Toronto
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333. Michelle Fraser, MD, Peterborough
334. Sharon Gazeley, MD, FCFP, Toronto
335. Wilson Lam, MD, Kingston
336. Donna Spaner, MD, CCFP(PC), Toronto
337. Jason Wong, Medical Student, Kitchener
338. Annie Foreman-Mackey, MPH Student, Toronto
339. Sabrina Lue Tam, MD, Hamilton
340. Harrison Cruikshank, JD, Toronto
341. Karissa Sarkioja, Medical Student, London
342. Elizabeth Krieger, RN, RP, Toronto

343. Etienne Nemanishen, RD, Ontario
344. Angela Ford, Clinical Clerk, Kingston
345. Brandon R., Nurse Practitioner, Toronto
346. Marc Adams, Addictions Specialist, Toronto
347. Jennifer Asselstine, Medical Student, Hamilton
348. Divyanshi Jalan, Medical Student, Kingston
349. Andrew Lee, Medical Student, Scarborough
350. Brittany, Cameron, MD, Toronto
351. Ashna Asim, Medical Student, Sydney
352. Lyndsey Gott, Medical Student, Kingston
353. Megan Singh, Medical Student, Kingston
354. Yasmin Kazemi, MD, Kingston
355. Elise Ford, Midwife, Hamilton
356. Meagan McLavish, MD, Toronto
357. Monica Gad, MD, Ajax
358. Genevieve Rochon-Terry, MD, Toronto
359. Stephanie Godard, MD, CCFP, Toronto
360. Kevin Senior, MD, Toronto
361. Emma van Reekum, Medical Student , Hamilton
362. Ceinwen Pope, MD, Toronto
363. Liane Bailey, Medical Student, Kingston
364. Heather Nichol, Medical Student, Kingston
365. Madison Price, Medical Student, Kingston
366. Dan Cojocar, MD, Toronto
367. Anne Mullen Grey, MD, PhD, Toronto
368. Julia Lew, Medical Student, Kingston
369. Andrea LeBlanc-Millar, MA, MN, NP-PHC, Toronto
370. Sue Hranilovic, NP-PH, Toronto
371. Claudia Meloche, Medical Student, Ottawa
372. Maxine Vigneault, RM, Ottawa
373. Priya Gupta, Medical Student, Hamilton
374. Allison Ouellette, Medical Student, Hamilton
375. Aadil Bharwani, MD-PhD Student, Hamilton
376. Senthujan Gunaseelan, Medical Student, Toronto
377. Jimmy Zhang, Medical Student, Burlington
378. Stephanie Hinton, Medical Student, Kingston
379. Aalok Shah, B.A.Sc., Kingston, Queen's University
380. Helene Morakis, Medical Student, Kingston
381. Bilal Bagha, Medical Student, St. Catharines
382. Jaime-Lee Munroe, Medical Student, Kingston
383. Aditya Nidumolu, Medical student, Hamilton
384. Lamia Gibson, R.Ac., Toronto
385. Laura Ball, Medical Student, London

386. Nisha Goel, Medical Student, St. Catharines
387. Madison Links, Medical Student, St. Catharines
388. Michael Milo, MD, Kingston
389. Katharine Alldred, RN, Toronto
390. Brindan Sivanandan, Medical Student, Toronto
391. Nadine Pandoo, MSW, Toronto
392. Kayla Dadgar, Medical Student, Hamilton
393. Rachel Berdan, COO, London
394. Jiin Kim, Medical Student, Hamilton
395. Amanda Leslie, Medical Student, St. Catharines
396. Carmelina Marziliano, Geriatric Social Worker, Toronto
397. Evan Schneider, MD, CCFP (PC), Toronto
398. Sara Robb, MSW, RSW, Toronto
399. Caryn Green, MD, CCFP, Richmond Hill
400. Tina Cumby, Social Worker, Peterborough
401. Alexandra Lacarte, RD, North Bay
402. Mark Polle, MD, Red Lake, ON
403. Andrea East, MD, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory
404. Wryan Hekmeczi, Medical Student, St. Catharines
405. Mary Ellen, Prangeq, RD, Cambridge, ON
406. Erin Lawson, OT, Toronto
407. Giuliana Guarna, MD Candidate, Hamilton
408. Paul Zalan, MD, Toronto
409. Jeff Bak, BA, London
410. Valène Aylwin, RD, New Liskeard
411. Elizabeth Smith, RD, Guelph
412. Alison Banwell, MD Student, Kingston
413. Hana Saab, BScN, PhD, Toronto
414. Akila Whiley, MD, Toronto
415. Victoria Lee-Kim, Medical Student, Kingston
416. Michelle Maisonville, Certified Doula, London, Ontario
417. Rose Patterson, NP-PHC, Toronto
418. Yervant Terzian, Health Informatician, Toronto
419. Julianne Lavoie, NP-PHC, Toronto
420. Thomas Debssou, MD, Toronto
421. Bronwyn Underhill, MPH, Toronto
422. Glenn Gaviller, Harm Reduction Worker/Counsellor, Toronto
423. Amika Gupta, MPH, Toronto
424. Nikki Reklitis, Medical Student, St Catharines
425. Jennifer Chung Lim, PT, MSc.PT, Toronto
426. Thyna Catamaran, Medical Student, St. Catharines
427. Jadie Schettino, MSW, Toronto
428. Linda Cole, Peer Mentor, Cambridge

429. Sherwin Wong, Medical Student, Kingston
430. Karrie Cumming, Health Promoter, Guelph
431. Andy Kroeker, BSc, MPA, West Lorne
432. Katalin Ivanyi, Family Physician, Hamilton
433. Melissa Cardinal, Public Health Dietitian, Embrun
434. Gail Teachman, PhD OT, London
435. Emily Rashotte, RN, Tweed
436. Simone Thibault, MSW, Ottawa
437. Tong Zhao-Ansari, Community Developer, Ottawa
438. Timothea Betty Le, Dentist, London
439. Sarah Colman, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
440. Anand Sinha, Medical Student, Hamilton
441. Melissa Abrams, NP-PHC, Toronto
442. Jessica Hales, Nurse Practitioner, Toronto
443. Elizabeth Lee, MD, Hamilton
444. Bev Leaver, MSW, Etobicoke
445. Yoko Schreiber, MD, Sioux Lookout
446. Ayla Raabis, Medical Student, Kingston
447. Amanda Murdoch, CCFP, Sioux Lookout
448. Elaine Bradley, MD, Toronto
449. Itamar E. Tamari, MD, CCFP, FCFP, Toronto
450. Monica Ramos, Clinic Administrator, Toronto
451. Kathy Kortés-Miller, Social Worker, Thunder Bay
452. Alexander Glover, MB BCh BAO, CCFP, Toronto
453. Kevin Workentin, MD, Toronto
454. Racquel Bremmer, Clinical Manager, Toronto
455. Jessica Braidek, MD, FRCPC Psychiatry, Toronto
456. Natalie Beaudoin-Doherty, Registered Psychotherapist, Midland
457. Kathleen O'Connell, Medical Student, Kingston
458. Emi Koyanagi, MSW, RSW, Ottawa
459. Natasha Beaudin, Health Promoter, Ottawa
460. Emi Koyanagi, MSW, RSW, Ottawa
461. Christina Marchanr, Health Services Manager, Ottawa
462. Emi Koyanagi, MSW, RSW, Ottawa
463. Rachele Gottardi, Administration and Programming Coordinator (Social Services and Equity Worker), Toronto
464. Jennifer McAlister, Medical Student, Kitchener
465. Abby Hershler, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
466. Laura Jamieson, MSc Global Health, Toronto
467. Alanna Wong, MD, Toronto
468. Kimberly Paterson, MSW, RSW, Ottawa
469. Kimberley Sandiland, RD, London
470. Marcus Zacharia, Multicultural Health Navigator, Ottawa

471. Julie Knights, RN, Toronto
472. Jacqui Herbert, RPh, Toronto
473. Adam Kaufman, MD, CCFP(EM), Toronto
474. Toby Bowers, RPN, Toronto
475. Elizabeth Carey, Registered Psychotherapist, Toronto
476. Caberry Yu, Medical Student, Kingston
477. Amy MacDonald, Registered Dietitian, Clinton
478. Cheryl Swallow, Community Resource Worker, Belleville
479. Lynne Raskin, CEO South Riverdale Community Health Centre, Toronto
480. Kimberley Boyle, Social Worker, Wellington
481. Ann McFeeters, RN, Kingston
482. Elia Abi-Jaoude, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
483. Jim Meeks, Harm Reduction Worker, Toronto
484. Robyn Kellam, PSW/DSW, Brantford
485. Michael Li, NP-PHC, Belleville
486. Lolade Shipeolu, Medical Student, Ottawa
487. Kimberly Keane, Community Health Worker, Ottawa
488. Rachel Lamont, MD, Hamilton
489. Anne Marie Batten, RN, Elgin
490. Emily Richmond, Medical Student, Toronto
491. Sharlene Wong, OT, Newmarket
492. Kasey Moss, Medical Student, Toronto
493. Sureka Pavalagantharajah, Medical Student, Hamilton
494. Kelli Turner, Medical Student, Hamilton
495. Angela Robertson, MD, Toronto
496. Victoria Liu, Medical Student, St. Catharines
497. Emily Daca, Statistician, Lindsay
498. Daniel Lazzam, Medical Student, Toronto
499. Nikhita Singhal, Medical Student, Hamilton
500. Marissa Aycan, Medical Student, Toronto
501. Jeremy Chitpin, MD, London
502. Ruphen Shaw, MD, Toronto
503. Laurie Szentirmai, RN, Brantford
504. Andrew Dawson, Medical Student, London
505. YiQing Ma, RD, Kingston
506. Jasmine Levesque, Medical Student, Kitchener
507. Samantha Biggs, MD, Thunder Bay
508. Jaimee Carter, Medical Student, Hamilton
509. Amy Pritzker, RSW, Orillia
510. Elyse Platt, Medical Student, Kitchener
511. Amanda Lee, Medical Student, St. Catharines
512. Maya Ricker-Wilson, RSW, MSW, Toronto
513. Stefanie Parashyniak, RT, Toronto

514. Andalib Haque, MD, CCFP, Toronto
515. Garret Horton, Medical Student, Kingston
516. Vanessa Lee, Medical Student, St. Catharines
517. Carolyn Doris, RD, Peterborough
518. Zak Zia, Medical Student, London
519. Angel Tse, Medical Student, Hamilton, Ontario
520. Jeyanth Inkaran, Medical Student, Markham
521. Briony Lago, Medical Student, Hamilton
522. Alexandra Lamoureux, MSW, RSW, Toronto
523. Sara Kassem, MSW, RSW, Toronto
524. Christanne Lewis, RN, Director - Belleville and Quinte West CHC, Quinte West
525. Elissa Aknay, MSW, RSW, Toronto
526. Leo Akiyamen, Medical Student, Toronto
527. Kristen Viaje, Medical Student, Hamilton
528. Kaili Gabriel, Social Worker, Kingston
529. Jessi Dobyns, MD, CCFP, Peterborough
530. Brian Lukaszewicz, Medical Student, Kingston
531. Vivek Patel, Medical Student, Hamilton
532. Shane Strickland, RN, Thunder Bay
533. Kaitlyn McDonald, RSW, Oshawa
534. Rachel Yantzi, MSN/MPH, RN, Hamilton
535. Maria Elisa, Maltese, RN, Toronto
536. Elaine Choi, Medical Student, Hamilton
537. Lindsay Hancock, MD, Sioux Lookout
538. Naomi Reaka, Medical Student, Hamilton
539. Paula Sneath, MD, Hamilton
540. Alanah Sutherland, RN, London
541. Laiya Carayannopoulos, MD, Hamilton
542. Danielle Robinson, Medical Student, Kingston
543. Karen Busche, MD, Hamilton
544. Jesse McLaren, MD, Toronto
545. Gillian Gray, MSW, RSW, Toronto
546. Nadia Alam, MD, Georgetown
547. Gail Glatt, MSW, RSW, Toronto
548. Vanessa Pike, RD, Ottawa
549. Ellen Robb, MD, St Catharines
550. Laura Dawson, Medical Student, Hamilton
551. Marcia Zemans, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
552. Chris Oldcorn, Writer, Wasaga
553. Oswin Chang, RN, CPMHN(C), Toronto
554. Pam Hanington, BA Hons MA, Clinton
555. Karim Suleman, PT, Toronto
556. Josée Sovinsky, RD, Toronto

557. Chantal Pinel, Administration, Ottawa
558. Wendy Chan, RDH, Toronto
559. Samantha Buttemer, MD, CCFP, Kingston
560. Rebekah Vaughan, Manager of Chronic Disease, Brampton
561. Kate Mulligan, PhD, Toronto
562. Samantha Menard, RD, Ottawa
563. Laura Proudfoot, CHRP, Newmarket
564. Taffita Chadsey, Canadian Athletic Therapist Association, Ottawa
565. James McAllister, PhD, Ajax
566. Becky Day, Drug and Alcohol Assessment Counselor, Sault Ste. Marie
567. Dianna Dawe, Transitional Case Manager - Community Mental Health Program; BA Honors Psychology, Sault Ste. Marie
568. Krista Vandermeer, MPH, Belleville
569. Taylor Piazza, Bail Counsellor, Sault Ste. Marie
570. Jessica Chan, Medical Student, St. Catharines
571. Naomi Nicholson, MD, Lindsay
572. Stuart Bothwell, MD, CCFP, Lindsay
573. Shannon Wall, Medical Receptionist, Belleville
574. Shannon Ernst, MSW, RSW, Kingston
575. Patrick Ladouceur, PhD(c), Ottawa
576. Jen Quinlan, Director Health Services, Toronto
577. Louis Fliss, DCh, BSc, Toronto
578. Meileen Joynt, Physician, Lindsay
579. Christine Lalonde, Peer Support Worker, Ottawa
580. Maria Costa, Medical Receptionist, Toronto
581. Liam Skinner, Social Worker, Toronto
582. Michele Heath, Director of Community Health, Regent Park CHC, Toronto
583. Liana Kaufman, MD CCFP, Toronto
584. Marg Tymstra, RN, Toronto
585. Shona MacKenzie, NP, Toronto
586. Jill Caines, MD, CCFP, Lindsay
587. Shannon Brent, Medical Student, Hamilton
588. Emma Seager, RM, Hamilton
589. Navpreet Sahsi, MD, CCFP(EM), Toronto
590. Risa Adams, MD, CCFP, Guelph
591. Joelle Forbes, Social Worker, Toronto
592. Kate Ritza, BSW, Toronto
593. Kate Hayman, MD, MPH, FRCPC, Toronto
594. Andrew Owens, Masseur, Toronto
595. Ruth McCallum, OT, Belleville
596. Jane Tooley, Medical Student, Hamilton
597. Mark Levitan, Medical Student, Ottawa
598. Janis Kelly, NP-PHC, Peterborough

599. Maggie Jiang, Medical Student, Kingston
600. Kelly Grant, MD, Toronto
601. Adrienne Batke, MD, Toronto
602. Trisha Rys, MD, Cobourg
603. Naomi Thulien, NP, PhD, Toronto
604. Juveria Zaheer, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
605. Paula Williams, MD, Toronto
606. Sabin Naqvi, MAcp, Toronto
607. Sandy Buchman, MD, CCFP(PC), FCFP, Toronto
608. Leslie Martin, MD, MHPE, FRCPC, Hamilton
609. Delia Dragomir, Medical Student, St. Catharines
610. Gabriel Lam, Medical Student, Kingston
611. Carlos Chan, Medical Student, Saint Catharines
612. Pat Larson, NP, Toronto
613. Laura Johnstone, Social Worker, Toronto
614. Chris McDonald, NP, London
615. John Neary, General Internist, Hamilton
616. Hernan Franck, MD, Hamilton
617. Anne Mugenyi, Nurse Practitioner, Toronto
618. Hannah Oatley MD, MSc, Toronto
619. James Lai, Medical Student, Hamilton
620. Melanie Bechard, MD, Ottawa
621. Ellen Snyder, MD, CCFP, Ottawa
622. Lindsay Metzger, NP-PHC, Waterloo
623. Shirley Watson, RN, Toronto
624. Bridget King, RD, Sudbury
625. Gail Harder, RN, St. Catharines
626. Danielle Penney, Medical Student, Toronto
627. Kathryn Chan, MD, Hamilton
628. Gary Thompson, Harm Reduction Worker, Toronto
629. Sherry Sandhu, MD, CCFP, Toronto
630. Norma Hannant, Social Worker, Toronto
631. Surkhab Peerzada, MPH, Toronto
632. Lesley Andrade, MHSc, RD, Waterloo
633. Richard Doan, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
634. Amy Alexander, MD, MHSc, CCFP, Oakville
635. Kathleen Wheeler, MD, Hamilton
636. Alison Fleming, Professor of Psychology Emerita, Toronto
637. Rachelle Sender, MD, CCFP, Hamilton
638. Trevor Morey, MD, Toronto
639. Nancy Bikaunieks, NP, Newmarket
640. Zara Fischer-Harrison, RN, Toronto
641. Lynn Dykeman, Social Worker, Hamilton

642. Tatiana Kostanenko, NP, Ayr
643. Alex Pearce, Medical Student, Hamilton
644. Lois Didyk, MSW, Toronto
645. Sarah Graham, MD, Thunder Bay
646. Annelise Miller, MD CM, CCFP, Ottawa
647. Ketan Vegda, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
648. Quynh Huynh, MD, Toronto
649. Willi Kirenko, NP, Chatham
650. Amit Arya, MD, CCFP, FCFP, Brampton
651. John Ihnat, MD, CCFP, Toronto
652. Sarah Rice, Nurse Practitioner, London
653. Laurie Matthews, Medical Student, Ottawa
654. Constantin Nastic, Peer Support Specialist, Aurora
655. Alisha Coe, Medical Student, Hamilton
656. Sujan Elancheran, Medical Student, Hamilton
657. Megan Schlorff, MD, Hamilton
658. Angela Arisz, MD, Ottawa
659. Mariah Hughes, MD, Ottawa
660. Alia Dharamsi, MD, Toronto
661. Victoria Myers, MD, Toronto
662. Neil Hamilton, MD, Toronto
663. Michael Galvin, BA Mod TP; MB, BCH, BAO, UofT (EM), Toronto
664. Taryn Lloyd, MD, Toronto
665. David J. Smith, MD, Toronto
666. Hargun Sidhu, Medical Student, Hamilton
667. Taylor Bischoff, MD, Toronto
668. Henry Ajzenberg, MD, Toronto
669. Vitalie Nyembwe, Health Promoter, Ottawa
670. Shirley Cheng, Health Promoter, Toronto
671. Sarah Kilbertus, MD, Toronto
672. Shannon Wiens, MSc(PI), Toronto
673. Daniela Boeri, Social Worker, Toronto
674. Lori Sutton, RD, Toronto
675. David Dorian, MD, Toronto
676. Lauren MacKenzie, RD, Toronto
677. Dipti Sharma, RN, Toronto
678. Maria Ricupero, RD, Toronto
679. Catherine Brooks, Clinical Counsellor, Toronto
680. Chiara DiAngelo, RD, Toronto
681. Merissa Taylor-Meissner, BSW, Toronto
682. Nimira Lalani, MSc, Toronto
683. Elena Lonerio, RN, Whitby
684. Adelle Atkinson, MD, Toronto

685. Megan Desjardins, MSW, RSW, Toronto
686. Raymond Ly, BSc Pharm., Edmonton
687. Alice Gray, MD, Toronto
688. Chelsea Allen, RD, Kitchener
689. Arnav Agarwal, MD, Toronto
690. Sarah Buzek, RD, Toronto
691. Kaija Nordgren, Community Rehab Worker, Sault Ste. Marie
692. Kim Curtin, MD, CCFP, Peterborough
693. Karen Hama, RN, Toronto
694. Andrée Clavet, Transitional Psychiatric Case Manager, Sault Ste. Marie
695. Kate Rush, BSW, RSW, Hamilton
696. Rashmi Rakheja, MSc, RD, Toronto
697. Emily Bellicoso, Medical Student, Toronto
698. Winny Li, MD, Toronto
699. Katrina Hui, MD, Toronto
700. Aidan Mitchell, MSW, RSW, Toronto
701. Sana Mahmood, NP, Toronto
702. Sarah Jackson, Social Worker, Sault Ste. Marie
703. Niran Argintaru, MD, Toronto
704. Linda Ta, RN/Diabetes Nurse Educator, Toronto
705. Susan Rosenthal, Physician (retired), Guelph
706. Amber Brown, RPN, Peterborough
707. Jennifer Stipetic, RN, Ottawa
708. April Chang, RD, Whitby
709. Aimee Quan, Administrative Assistant, Toronto
710. Britt Lehmann-Bender, MD, CCFP, Peterborough
711. Kyall Rakoz, Medical Student, St. Catharines
712. Karin Bogad, RN, Toronto
713. Heather Harvey, MHSc, RD, Hamilton
714. Manon Bouchard, NP, Ottawa
715. Christine Adamson, RN, Toronto
716. Kirah Hahn, Medical Student, Dublin/Kawartha Lakes
717. Alexandra Domingues, Pharmacy Student, Toronto
718. Joanne Bazak-Brokking, OT, Peterborough
719. Jessica Arteaga, Nursing Student, University of Toronto, Toronto
720. Mary Rose MacDonald, Family Physician, Toronto
721. Stephanie Bazak, MD, Hamilton
722. Becky Pang, RD, CDE, Markham
723. Anna Skorzewska, MD, Toronto
724. Cristina Balaita, MD, Toronto
725. Jane Mark, RN, Peterborough
726. Anton Nikouline, MD, Toronto
727. Kirby Ding, MD, Toronto

728. Victoria McKinnon, Medical Student, Waterloo
729. Betty Hum, MD, CCFP, Toronto
730. Victoria-Marie Cusson, Medical Student, Ottawa
731. Gillian Kyle, Midwifery Student, Toronto
732. Barbara Neuwelt, Health Care Manager, Ottawa
733. Parul Agarwal, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
734. Jasmine Montreuil, MA, RD, CDE, Toronto
735. Michael Scott, MD, Toronto
736. Savannah Forrester, MD, Toronto
737. Nimerta Dhami, RM, Toronto
738. Jessica Gilbert, MSW, RSW, Toronto
739. Maureen Hewitt, RN, Ottawa
740. Sally Asante, RN, Scarborough
741. Tracy McDonough, RD, Kingston
742. Edesiri Udoh, BDS, MPH, Brampton
743. Erin Reyce, RD, North Bay
744. Nadjla Banaei, Social Service Worker, Toronto
745. Yoella Teplitsky, MD, Toronto
746. Mei Xie, RN, Toronto
747. Melissa Knott, OT, London
748. Holly Tschirhart, RN, PhD Student, Toronto
749. G. Imrie, CHRL, Toronto
750. Alexandra Blight, NP, Toronto
751. Lorraine Lam, Social Worker, Toronto
752. Kelly St. Pierre, RN, Hamilton
753. Daniel Parlow, Harm Reduction, Ottawa
754. Susan Woolhouse, MD, Toronto
755. Daniela Graziano, Nursing Student, Toronto
756. Danielle Kenyon, NP, Toronto
757. Zoe Barnett, RD, Toronto
758. Debbie Honickman, Physician, Creemore
759. Courtney Niven, Youth Resource Worker, Toronto
760. Jolene Taker, RSW, Toronto
761. Gayle Parker, NP, Kitchener
762. Wanda Romaniec, MSW, Ottawa
763. Yuwen Deng, Medical Student, Hamilton
764. Melanie Oda, RN, Toronto
765. Ashley Edwardson, RSW, Toronto
766. Molly McGillis, Registered Nurse, Toronto
767. Irene Cheung, RD, Toronto
768. Julie Malian, MSW, RSW, Toronto
769. Jessica Nanni, NP-PHC, Toronto
770. Robyn Beckett, MPH Student, Toronto

771. Mara Hayward, MPH, Toronto
772. Alice Gauntley, MPH Student, Toronto
773. Maureen Gustafson, MPH Student, Toronto
774. Megan Saad, MPH Student, Toronto
775. Anushka Weeraratne, MD, Hamilton
776. Sarah Warren, MPH Student, Pickering
777. Rosalyn Haffenden, RN, Mississauga
778. Annika Ollner, MSW, RSW, Toronto
779. Shaista Zainul, RN, Brampton
780. Caroline Melymuk, RN, Toronto
781. Karen Finch, RN, Toronto
782. Salima Mithani, RN, MPH Student, Toronto
783. Cesar Calero, R.Kin, Toronto
784. Bourke Tillmann, MD, FRCPC, Toronto
785. Marie Blais, RN, Ottawa
786. Zainab Furqan, Physician, Toronto
787. Alexandra Siebert, Medical Student, Hamilton
788. Susan Howlett, RM, Peterborough
789. Bhutila Karpoche, MPH, PhD(c), Toronto
790. Heather McDonald, OT, Toronto
791. Deborah Siegal, MD, FRCPC, Ancaster
792. Nadia Pabani, RD, Toronto
793. Laura Donovan, RD, Quinte West
794. Thrmiga Sathiyamoorthy, Community Researcher, Toronto
795. Laura Salamanca, Counsellor, Toronto
796. Alexandra Piatkowski, MPH, Epidemiologist, Toronto
797. Hank Cheng, Professional Service Analyst, Toronto
798. Leigh Anne Martin, Nurse Practitioner, Toronto
799. Hannah Fleisher, Manager of Health Promotion, Planning & QI, Toronto
800. Elisabeth White, BA, MHA, Toronto
801. Neha Mahmood, Student, Toronto
802. Kim Moore, Medical Student, Thorold
803. Madeleine Bondy, Medical Student, Toronto
804. Alissa Klingbaum, MPH, Toronto
805. Rabbia Ashraf, Social Work Student, Toronto
806. Sajeth Paskaran, Student, Ajax
807. Charlotte Bondy, MSW, Toronto
808. Aleksandar Ivovic, PhD, JD Student, Toronto
809. Michael Adia, MSW, RSW, Toronto
810. Mathieu Dufour, MD, FRCPC, Ottawa
811. Steve Lurie, CM, MSW, MMgt, Toronto
812. Maeve Freeman-McIntyre, Nurse, Toronto
813. Bridget Doan, Paediatric NP, Toronto

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