

Media Release

September 22, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arran-Elderslie, Brockton, West Grey call for provincial support for rural health care

Citing the longstanding and increasing closures of local emergency departments in Chesley, Walkerton and Durham, the three municipalities are calling for provincial support to immediately address the chronic staffing shortages and corresponding community impact.

“When emergency departments close in our three communities, paramedic and emergency services are redirected to neighbouring hospitals. These hospitals are further away and impacted by the influx of our redirected patients. This is not a solution. It’s merely a shifting of the problem,” said Steve Hammell, mayor, Arran-Elderslie.

Brockton mayor Chris Peabody notes this has become an urgent issue that must be addressed.

“Our municipalities have brought this matter to the attention of the province time and again,” Mayor Peabody said. “Numerous delegations at AMO, ROMA, Queen’s Park and meetings and dialogue with our members of provincial parliament have been effective in keeping this matter in the forefront. However, it’s time for solutions and action to protect our exceptional and essential rural health care.”

West Grey mayor Kevin Eccles adds that the local impact is significant and there is also a wider, provincial risk that this crisis will directly affect Premier Ford’s government’s mandate to build more homes.

“Healthcare is a cornerstone of a thriving, vibrant and liveable community,” said Mayor Eccles. “Our rural healthcare infrastructure needs to grow in concert with residential growth. Ensuring equal, timely access to healthcare for all residents is essential for a healthy community.”

The Ontario Health Coalition, along with the Grey Bruce Health Coalition, are attending the opening of parliament at Queen’s Park on Monday, September 25 to again bring this matter to the province’s attention. Mayors Eccles, Hammell and Peabody are supportive of advocacy efforts and focused on building on the progress made so far.

All three mayors are calling on the Minister of Health and our local MPPs to meet with their municipalities to collaboratively address this crisis and find solutions.

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