

November 30, 2022

Dr. Rhonda Lenton
President and Vice Chancellor
York University
1050 Kaneff Tower
4700 Keele Street
Toronto, ON M3J 1P3

RE: Proposed York University School of Medicine

Dear President Lenton,

For more than a century, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) has supported economic growth in Ontario by advocating for business priorities at Queen's Park on behalf of our 60,000 members, including local chambers of commerce and boards of trades in over 157 communities.

As we face an unprecedented crisis in our health care system, all available avenues must be pursued to support its capacity and resilience for the long-term. A strong health care system is foundational to a productive workforce and robust, inclusive economic growth.

On behalf of the OCC, I would like to express our support for the proposed York University School of Medicine. The opportunity to increase access to medical education in Ontario could not come at a more critical juncture, as health care workers increasingly report higher levels of stress, burnout, and an intention to leave their jobs: recent [Statistic Canada data](#) demonstrates a nearly twofold increase in job vacancies in all health subsectors over the past two years, while the [Ontario College of Family Physicians](#) estimates that one-in-five Ontarians could be without a family doctor by 2025.

These service gaps not only impact patients' ability to access timely care and remain healthy and productive, but also have a ripple effect on Ontario businesses and the economy. If patients are unable to access the care they need due to staffing shortages, they may be forced to take on additional caregiving responsibilities and potentially exit the workforce altogether.

The establishment of the York University School of Medicine is a crucial opportunity to help address these structural shortages, secure the HHR talent pipeline, and support the next generation of health care professionals. Among the OCC's key [recommendations to tackle the HHR crisis](#) is increased enrolment in post-secondary institutions for health care programs, including family medicine, mental health, and geriatric medicine, as well as nurse practitioners, registered nurses, registered practical nurses, and medical laboratory programs. A new School of Medicine is a valuable opportunity to support prospective students and grow the health care workforce of the future.

York University's existing health-related programs (e.g., in nursing) would provide a strong foundation for the proposed School of Medicine and facilitate strong interdisciplinary and interprofessional education opportunities for students. This approach would align with the desired provincial shift toward integrated, community-based models of care, which can respond more nimbly to Ontario's changing demographics and spectrum of care needs, including an aging

population, increasing mental health and addiction challenges, and ongoing health disparities across populations and regions.

York University is a valued member of the OCC and our [Health Policy Council](#) and has been a vital voice in helping to shape policy priorities related to health care system modernization, innovation, and resilience in Ontario. We strongly support the proposed York University School of Medicine and the value it would generate for Ontario's health care system and our economy as a whole.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this proposal and welcome the opportunity to discuss it further.

Sincerely,



Rocco Rossi
President and CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce