



HEALTH RECRUITMENT PARTNERSHIP

ZOOM

8:30 A.M.

June 1, 2026

1. Disclosures of Conflict of Interest
2. Confirmation of Minutes: March 30, 2026
3. New Business
 - a) Elgin Ontario Health Team Briefing Note

Deanna Huggett and Briar McCaw, Elgin Ontario Health Team will be in attendance to discuss alignment of recruitment, workforce planning and access to care in Elgin-St. Thomas. **Pages 2-3**
 - b) Activity Report and Recruitment Projects: Health Recruiter. **Pages 4-6**
 - c) Health Recruitment Incentive Funding - Dr. Ahmed Osman

Report HRP-03-26. **Page 7**
 - d) Health Recruitment Incentive Funding - Dr. Seyi Olanipekun

Report HRP-04-26. **Page 8**
 - e) Health Recruitment Incentive Funding - Dr. Chibuike Egwim

Report HRP-05-26. **Page 9**
 - f) Health Recruitment Incentive Funding - Dr. Zeeshan Chatteroo

Report HRP-06-26. **Page 10**
4. Unfinished Business
5. Next Meeting
6. Adjournment



Briefing Note for Discussion: Exploring Opportunities to Align Recruitment, Workforce Planning, and Access to Care

Date: May 25, 2026

To: Elgin St. Thomas Healthcare Recruitment Partnership

From: Deanna Huggett, Executive Director, Elgin Ontario Health Team

Purpose: To support collaborative discussions with the Elgin St. Thomas Healthcare Recruitment Partnership (ESTHRP) on opportunities to strengthen visibility of local primary care need and explore coordinated approaches that align recruitment, workforce planning, and resident attachment to care in Elgin.

Background: The Elgin Ontario Health Team and Elgin Primary Care Network are working toward a more coordinated approach to primary care access and attachment. Current estimates suggest approximately 8,000 residents in do not have a family doctor or nurse practitioner, while an additional 20,000 residents receive primary care outside Elgin. Despite this level of need, only approximately 350 residents are currently registered with Health Care Connect (HCC), the provincially funded waitlist for primary care.

This discrepancy suggests local need is fragmented and largely invisible to the system. Residents may register on multiple clinic lists, contact clinics directly, rely on word-of-mouth approaches, seek care outside Elgin, or not seek attachment at all. As a result, current signals of community need may underestimate true demand and limit the ability to align recruitment, workforce planning, and attachment strategies.

In Elgin, HCC is being promoted as the recommended pathway to support a centralized primary care waitlist and improve visibility into community need. While previous HCC experiences and uptake have presented challenges, opportunities exist to strengthen local attachment processes and improve how centralized information supports providers and residents.

Current Context: Recent investment of \$4.055M to expand interprofessional primary care team capacity in Elgin is expected to support attachment of approximately 8,000 residents by May 2027. This investment includes recruitment of nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other integrated health professionals, with recruitment activities required in the near term to support implementation.

As implementation progresses, understanding where unmet need exists and aligning recruitment efforts with community priorities will become increasingly important. Improved visibility of primary care need may help support recruitment planning, workforce development, and implementation of coordinated, neighbourhood-based models of care.

Recruitment and Workforce Planning Considerations: A coordinated approach to understanding unmet need may support recruitment efforts beyond resident attachment alone. Better visibility into community need can help inform:

- geographic areas with the greatest unmet need
- neighbourhood or population-specific access challenges



- community growth patterns and future demand
- opportunities for team-based care expansion
- workforce planning needs extending beyond physicians

Over time, this information could support a broader recruitment and workforce planning role for ESTHRP and help align future recruitment efforts with identified community need.

Why This Matters: A coordinated approach to attachment helps improve visibility of local primary care need and supports a more consistent process for connecting residents to care as capacity becomes available. For physicians, this approach may provide:

- a structured pathway for panel development
- reduced administrative burden related to identifying and onboarding patients
- access to supported attachment processes that assess needs and connect residents to appropriate services before attachment, helping maximize use of team-based resources

Without a shared approach, attachment may rely on individual clinic processes, personal networks, or a resident's ability to navigate the system. This may unintentionally create inequities while limiting understanding of unmet need. A coordinated approach also supports Elgin's Neighbourhood Health Home model by helping align care delivery and planning around communities and neighbourhoods.

Supported Attachment Pathway: A supported attachment pathway helps bridge the gap between registration on the centralized waitlist and long-term attachment to primary care. For example, the Elgin Community Health Hub supports unattached residents through intake, assessment, interim team-based care, and connection to appropriate services while residents work toward attachment. This approach supports informed patient/client matching, reduces onboarding burden for community physicians, and preserves flexibility in how providers build and manage their panels.

Opportunity for ESTHRP: ESTHRP is well positioned to strengthen connections between healthcare recruitment, community growth, and primary care access planning. Through its relationships with physicians, municipalities, employers, and community partners, ESTHRP can help improve understanding of community need and support recruitment approaches that align with local priorities, emerging care models, and workforce needs.

Recommended Actions: It is recommended that ESTHRP:

- Support awareness of coordinated attachment pathways, including Health Care Connect and local supported attachment processes, within recruitment, onboarding, and community-facing materials to improve visibility of local need.
- Explore opportunities to strengthen alignment between recruitment activities and demonstrated community needs, including future workforce planning considerations and evolving interprofessional recruitment requirements.
- Consider recruitment approaches and incentives that support participation in Elgin's Neighbourhood Health Home model and broader community of access priorities.

St. Thomas- Elgin Health Recruitment Partnership Committee

Update Report

April/May 2026

1. Lisa Higgs and I have had five introductory meetings with physicians committed to joining the TMC St. Thomas location to open full-time practices. One started in May, and others have staggered start dates. Each has been asked to express interest in the incentive grant, which they have done via email.
2. Some of the physicians we have spoken to have asked for help in securing rental accommodations for their families. I have been in touch with Suzie Dennis of Dough Tarry Homes, who has been open to offering a rent-free space for at least one of them; however, it has not worked out. I am thankful for the opportunity to explore that exists. I contacted a relator who has successfully found a rental space for one of the new physicians.
3. In appreciation for the work the physicians in our community do, a Health Recruitment Partnership Physician Appreciation Event was held on Friday, May 1st, at 4 pm. The well-attended event of three hours had over 20 people show up at the stunning Skye Chase Estate Winery. It comprised physicians, members of the HRP committee, members of the St Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce, Warden Dominique Giguère, Mayor Joe Preston, and Elgin OHT representatives, to mention a few. Many thanks to Carolyn Krahn, Blaine Parkins, and the team at the County office for putting this great event together. It was a lovely evening filled with nothing but gratitude for

our physicians, good food, and networking. Each physician left with a gift that demonstrated how much they are appreciated for the invaluable work they do.

4. The 2026 Family Medicine Residents Retreat was held at The Blue Mountain Village. It was held on Friday, May 22nd, and was concluded on Sunday, May 24th, 2026. Taylor Mooney, the Strategic Initiatives Manager for the City of St. Thomas, represented our community at the Career Fair. There were about 40-50 residents who stopped by the booth. Our inventory list has been sent to those interested as a follow-up. Many of the residents who had taken electives in STEGH had nothing but positive things to say about their experience, which is a great plus for our community.
5. Excited to share that there is a replacement for a retiring Elgin FHO physician. I have connected with the new physician, who incidentally did her rotation at STEGH and is very familiar with our community. In 2024, she couldn't attend our Home for the Holidays event due to a planned trip. The plan is to arrange a meeting when she gets back to connect her with Lisa Higgs for an introductory meeting.
6. The West Elgin CHC is looking for a locum for 3 months. An updated posting with a higher locum hourly rate was reflected. Sharing this updated version in search of an interested candidate.
7. Discovery Week 2026 starts today with community events from June 1st to June 3rd, 2026. This year's events include a brief welcome of our 16 first-year Schulich School of Medicine students at the hotel lobby at 5 pm, followed by an evening event at the Dalewood Conservation. St Thomas & Elgin Home Builders' Association (STEHBA) will

host the students & members of the HRP committee on June 2nd at their annual Trades Appreciation BBQ event at the Wildflowers Farm, and finally on June 3rd, an evening hosted by the Elgin Farmers' Federation at the Howe Family Farm Market

8. I approached Paul Jenkins, the Chair of St. Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce, to see if I could get some donations to be added to the goodie bags. He has graciously put together 16 bags for our Discovery Week medical students. A big thank you to him and the team.
9. I connected with a specialist who needed a space to open a practice in town. I have since connected her with two potential contacts with suitable spaces available for rent.
10. Since connecting with the recent graduate who was interested in any locum openings in our community, I have been able to connect her with 3 potential clinics that she is in talks with.
11. I connected with two physicians who have shown interest in opening a practice in our community. I am working with them to see how to help make their transition smooth and possible. I have taken the time to share opportunities available in our community.

Submitted by Uzo Ajogwu (Health Recruiter - City of St Thomas - County of Elgin)



Report No.
CM-HRP 2026-03

File No.

Directed to: Chair Lori Baldwin-Sands and Members of Health Recruitment Partnership

Date Authored: May 22, 2025

Meeting Date: June 1, 2025

Department: City Manager’s Office

Attachment

Prepared By: Lisa Higgs

None.

Subject: Recommendation - Health Recruitment Incentive Funding to Dr. Ahmed Osman

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Health Recruitment Partnership Committee approve an allocation of \$33,000 in Health Recruitment Incentive funding to Dr. Ahmed Osman, pending approval by St. Thomas City Council.

Background:

Dr. Ahmed Osman joined Thompson Medical Centre effective May 19, 2026, and is establishing his medical practice within the community. In May 2026, the City Manager and Health Recruiter met with Dr. Osman to discuss his transition to the community, plans for practice development, and anticipated timelines for patient attachment and roster growth.

Dr. Osman has requested support through the Health Recruitment Incentive Program to assist with the significant upfront costs associated with establishing and operating a family medicine practice. The requested funding of \$33,000 would support the initial overhead costs associated with establishing the medical practice, including operational expenses incurred during the early stages of patient roster development. These costs may include leasehold and office setup expenses, equipment, technology, staffing, and other start-up requirements necessary to support the successful launch and sustainability of the practice. This declared use of funds meets the requirements of the Health Recruitment Partnership incentive funding program.

Following approval by the Health Recruitment Partnership Committee of this report’s proposed recommendation, a draft incentive funding agreement will be prepared for review and signature by Dr. Osman. The final agreement will be executed once St. Thomas City Council formal approvals are in place.

Financial Impact:

Subject to City Council’s approval of the incentive funding as outlined above, all funding will be made immediately available to Dr. Osman through the 2026 Health Recruitment Partnership operating budget. The amount allocated to Dr. Osman will be the first grant approved in 2026.

Respectfully,

Lisa Higgs, City Manager

Reviewed By: _____

Approved By:


City Manager



Report No.
CM-HRP 2026-04

File No.

Directed to: Chair Lori Baldwin-Sands and Members of Health Recruitment Partnership

Date Authored: May 22, 2025
Meeting Date: June 1, 2025

Department: City Manager’s Office
Prepared By: Lisa Higgs

Attachment
None.

Subject: Recommendation - Health Recruitment Incentive Funding to Dr. Seyi Olanipekun

Recommendation:
It is recommended that the Health Recruitment Partnership Committee approve an allocation of \$33,000 in Health Recruitment Incentive funding to Dr. Seyi Olanipekun, pending approval by St. Thomas City Council.

Background:
Dr. Seyi Olanipekun will be joining Thompson Medical Centre with an anticipated start date of September 14, 2026, and will be establishing a new family medicine practice within the community. The City Manager and Health Recruiter have met with Dr. Olanipekun to discuss his transition to the community, practice development plans, and anticipated timelines for patient attachment and roster growth.

Dr. Olanipekun is relocating to the region from the United Kingdom, where he has practiced medicine for the past six years. Originally from Nigeria and medically trained in Nigeria, Dr. Olanipekun is looking forward to relocating to the community with his wife and two young daughters. During discussions with City representatives, he expressed interest in learning more about the local Nigerian diaspora and community connections within the region.

Dr. Olanipekun has requested support through the Health Recruitment Incentive Program to assist with the significant upfront costs associated with establishing and operating a family medicine practice. The requested funding of \$33,000 would support the initial overhead costs associated with establishing the medical practice, including operational expenses incurred during the early stages of patient roster development. These costs may include leasehold and office setup expenses, equipment, technology, staffing, and other start-up requirements necessary to support the successful launch and sustainability of the practice. This declared use of funds meets the requirements of the Health Recruitment Partnership incentive funding program.

Following approval by the Health Recruitment Partnership Committee of this report’s proposed recommendation, a draft incentive funding agreement will be prepared for review and signature by Dr. Olanipekun. The final agreement will be executed once St. Thomas City Council formal approvals are in place.

Financial Impact:
Subject to City Council’s approval of the incentive funding as outlined above, all funding will be made immediately available to Dr. Olanipekun through the 2026 Health Recruitment Partnership operating budget. The amount allocated to Dr. Olanipekun will be the second grant approved in 2026.

Respectfully,

Lisa Higgs, City Manager

Reviewed By: _____

Approved By: 
City Manager



Report No.
CM-HRP 2026-05

File No.

Directed to: Chair Lori Baldwin-Sands and Members of Health Recruitment Partnership

Date Authored: May 22, 2025

Meeting Date: June 1, 2025

Department: City Manager’s Office

Attachment

Prepared By: Lisa Higgs

None.

Subject: Recommendation - Health Recruitment Incentive Funding to Dr. Chibuike Egwim

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Health Recruitment Partnership Committee approve an allocation of \$33,000 in Health Recruitment Incentive funding to Dr. Chibuike Egwim, pending approval by St. Thomas City Council.

Background:

Dr. Chibuike Egwim will be joining Thompson Medical Centre effective August 31, 2026, and will be establishing a new family medicine practice within the community. The City Manager and Health Recruiter have met with Dr. Egwim to discuss his relocation to the region, practice development plans, and anticipated timelines for patient attachment and roster growth.

Dr. Egwim is relocating from Liverpool, United Kingdom, and is looking forward to establishing his practice and family within the region. His wife will also be relocating to the area and plans to attend Western University to pursue studies toward becoming a Nurse Practitioner. While his wife previously lived in Ottawa for approximately 15 years, neither Dr. Egwim nor his wife have spent significant time in Southwestern Ontario and are enthusiastic about becoming part of the community.

Dr. Egwim has requested support through the Health Recruitment Incentive Program to assist with the significant upfront costs associated with establishing and operating a family medicine practice. The requested funding of \$33,000 would support the initial overhead costs associated with establishing the medical practice, including operational expenses incurred during the early stages of patient roster development. These costs may include leasehold and office setup expenses, equipment, technology, staffing, and other start-up requirements necessary to support the successful launch and sustainability of the practice. This declared use of funds meets the requirements of the Health Recruitment Partnership incentive funding program.

Following approval by the Health Recruitment Partnership Committee of this report’s proposed recommendation, a draft incentive funding agreement will be prepared for review and signature by Dr. Egwim. The final agreement will be executed once St. Thomas City Council formal approvals are in place.

Financial Impact:

Subject to City Council’s approval of the incentive funding as outlined above, all funding will be made immediately available to Dr. Egwim through the 2026 Health Recruitment Partnership operating budget. The amount allocated to Dr. Egwim will be the third grant approved in 2026.

Respectfully,

Lisa Higgs, City Manager

Reviewed By: _____

Approved By:


City Manager



Report No.
CM-HRP 2026-06

File No.

Directed to: Chair Lori Baldwin-Sands and Members of Health Recruitment Partnership

Date Authored: May 22, 2025

Meeting Date: June 1, 2025

Department: City Manager’s Office

Attachment

Prepared By: Lisa Higgs

None.

Subject: Recommendation - Health Recruitment Incentive Funding to Dr. Zeeshan Chattaroo

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Health Recruitment Partnership Committee approve an allocation of \$33,000 in Health Recruitment Incentive funding to Dr. Zeeshan Chattaroo, pending approval by St. Thomas City Council.

Background:

Dr. Zeeshan Chattaroo will be joining Thompson Medical Centre effective June 15, 2026, as a full-time family physician. The City Manager and Health Recruiter have met with Dr. Chattaroo to discuss his relocation to the community, practice integration, and anticipated timelines for patient attachment and roster development.

Dr. Chattaroo is currently practicing in a walk-in clinic in Kitchener and is enthusiastic about transitioning into comprehensive, full-time family medicine practice within the community. He holds a master’s degree obtained in the United Kingdom and an MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) obtained in India and is fully certified to practice medicine in Canada.

He brings a strong interest in providing care to diverse populations and is multilingual, speaking English and French, as well as additional languages including Hindi, with ongoing interest in learning Mandarin. Dr. Chattaroo will be working full-time at Thompson Medical Centre, Monday to Friday, and is committed to building a long-term patient roster within the community.

Dr. Chattaroo has requested support through the Health Recruitment Incentive Program to assist with the significant upfront costs associated with establishing and operating a family medicine practice. The requested funding of \$33,000 would support the initial overhead costs associated with establishing the medical practice, including operational expenses incurred during the early stages of patient roster development. These costs may include leasehold and office setup expenses, equipment, technology, staffing, and other start-up requirements necessary to support the successful launch and sustainability of the practice. This declared use of funds meets the requirements of the Health Recruitment Partnership incentive funding program.

Following approval by the Health Recruitment Partnership Committee of this report’s proposed recommendation, a draft incentive funding agreement will be prepared for review and signature by Dr. Chattaroo. The final agreement will be executed once St. Thomas City Council formal approvals are in place.

Financial Impact:

Subject to City Council’s approval of the incentive funding as outlined above, all funding will be made immediately available to Dr. Chattaroo through the 2026 Health Recruitment Partnership operating budget. The amount allocated to Dr. Chattaroo will be the fourth grant approved in 2026.

Respectfully,

Lisa Higgs, City Manager

Reviewed By: _____

Approved By: 
City Manager