

1. The ability of the WECHC to offer primary care to patients in Elgin County is severely hampered by the extreme wage gap within the health sector.
2. Our maximum salary for a nurse practitioner is \$30,000 per year, lower than an NP working in a London hospital.
3. Our maximum salary for a registered nurse is \$28,000 less
4. Our maximum salary for a mental health counsellor is \$24,000 less.
5. The wage gap impacts our ability to recruit and retain professional staff.
6. Staff turnover impacts the continuity of care for our clients.
7. It was extremely disappointing to read in the media the response from the Minister of Health and Deputy Premier to this issue that “CHCs are independent and have control over the salaries they pay.” CHCs are funded by the Ministry of Health through Ontario Health and are mandated not to have a budget deficit. The Ministry of Health established the salary grid we use.
8. Clearly, either the Minister of Health does not know or understand how the CHC sector is funded, or this response was a political statement intended to sidestep the issue with a falsehood. Neither explanation is acceptable from a senior minister.
9. When conducting the recent survey of people in Elgin County, particularly at the Fall Fairs in Rodney and Wallacetown, the overwhelming reaction of people asked to sign our petition was anger. “The Provincial Government is ignoring the needs of people in rural Ontario.” Once the issue was explained, people were eager to sign the petition.
10. There is clear evidence that primary care patients of CHCs visit hospital emergency rooms less frequently than the general population, saving the province millions of dollars every year.
11. If properly funded, CHCs can expand primary care in Ontario more economically than other models.
12. CHCs follow the clinical model expounded by Dr. Jane Philpott where primary care providers are supported by teams of carers, including dietitians, diabetes teams, social workers, mental health counsellors and many more.
13. These issues are recognized by ROMA and the AMO, and the leaders of both organizations have pledged their support and offered to continue lobbying on our behalf.
14. This memorandum fulfils Minister Flack's request for a one-page summary of our issues. We would be happy to provide additional information at any time. It was prepared and approved by the Board of West Elgin Community Health Centre.