

# Quarterly Update Report

**Title:** Strategic Initiatives Fourth Quarter Report

**Report Number:** Strategic Initiatives-2025-01

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025

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## Communications:

We continue to provide organization-wide support for developing communications and engagement with our community and various audiences.

In the final quarter of 2024, requests for support via our communications form included:

- October 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> – 69
- November 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> – 50
- December 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> – 42

A decrease in activity is typical as we head towards the seasonal break, budgetary decisions, and a new calendar year. During this time projects included larger, multi-channel approaches and we also begin focusing on our strategies and improvements for the year ahead.

We also saw the return of winter in the third quarter, and this increases the need for specialty communications around closures and safety. The communications requests above do not reflect the impact of these events. Multiple significant weather events, squalls, and even a blizzard have kept the channels busy.

We continued with our monthly full-page piece in the Kincardine Independent along with our monthly digital Municipal Connects e-newsletters. Distributing information across multiple channels for projects has seen us utilizing multiple platforms including print, radio, and digital.

Building this multi-faceted approach into our preliminary communications, engagement, and customer service strategy planning in this last quarter is helping to provide a focused framework for development in the new year.

## Economic Development:

- Working with several landowners that have vacant parcels with high development potential to move forward with a project or encourage them to list the property for sale if they have no plans for development.

- Continue to work with developers that are considering purchasing or pursuing projects in the Municipality of Kincardine.
- Lead point of contact for a few companies that are pursuing a new location in Kincardine with plans to open new businesses here in 2025.
- Reviewing the Bruce Power Response to Summary of Issues document that is posted on the Bruce C Impact Assessment Agency (IAAC) website and preparing to provide comments and attend public events in 2025.
- Supporting the final Spruce the Bruce grants for 2024. A Council report will be provided in early 2025 with an overview of the 2024 program.
- Attend numerous business networking events and gatherings
- Cleaning up and finishing files and projects in preparation for staff transition in early 2025.
- Interviews were held to recruit for the 2-year contract Community Economic Development position.
- Supported the presentation at the Chamber of Commerce – Mayor’s breakfast event.

## **Housing:**

- Continue to meet with community partners like Community Living, the Women’s Shelter, Bruce County Housing staff, Russell Meadows and engaging with some developers to explore affordable or supportive housing development.
- Work to advance Council’s motion on the 705 Prince’s site continues.

## **Tourism:**

- The Welcome Centre was closed in December due to staff vacancy. Phone calls and requests for information are being fulfilled by Strategic Initiatives staff in the interim.
- Staff supported Hometown Christmas by providing information displays, children’s crafts and assistance with the lighting of the park.
- Interviews were held this December to recruit for the Tourism Coordinator role.
- Presented an update at the BIA meeting.
- Conducted a scan of Municipalities who have implemented a MAT tax in order to identify promising practices and lessons learned.
- Applied for a Canada Day grant.
- Met with RT07, BIA, Chamber of Commerce and Municipal staff to review the visitation data from the summer of 2024.

## **Physician Recruitment:**

### Current Status

- 10 physicians currently make up the Kincardine Family Health Organization (KFHO, also known as the Kincardine Physicians Group), with 14,500 attached patients.
- Estimates show another possible 3000 unattached people without a family doctor.

- 16 physicians at minimum are needed now to serve our current population, work in ER, and provide hospital inpatient coverage.
- 2 new physicians started work in family medicine in 2024, replacing 2 physicians who left the KFHO. Having 2 new physicians replace both leaving physicians has prevented an additional 2600 people being added to the unattached group of people without a family doctor.
- 1 new physician is starting full time ER and hospitalist work in January 2025.
- 2 more physicians are planning to start family medicine practices in 2025.
- 1 more physician is planning to join the Kincardine FHO in 2026.
- Kincardine will have an estimated 12 physicians working as family doctors by the end of 2025. Currently we need to recruit 4 more physicians.
- Future population growth will require more physicians to join our community.

### Recruitment work

Practice Ready Ontario (PRO) is a new Ministry of Health pilot program to streamline the integration of Internationally Trained Physicians (ITPs) into high need communities in Ontario. Kincardine applied to this program and a PRO candidate has accepted an offer to complete a 3-year return of service in Kincardine under a local physician's supervision starting later in 2025.

In December 2024 Dr Albert Luu who is currently completing his medical residency signed a physician recruitment agreement with Kincardine, potentially starting in July 2026.

This fall the Kincardine FHO hosted 4 clinic locum doctors recruited to work at the medical clinic. These locums provided coverage for physicians to work in the hospital, ER shifts or vacation coverage. They are introduced to the clinic team, providing a good opportunity to see if they would like to sign up to practice medicine in Kincardine.

In November, Kincardine represented SOPRA (Southern Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance) at a Practice Match recruitment job fair in New York City, where over 600 physicians were present at the job fair, some of them Canadians abroad. Working with SOPRA allows for a wider international recruitment reach, each member (17 total) commits to 2 job fairs a year and all candidate information is shared equally.

Kincardine had a booth at the McMaster University Family Medicine Annual Recruitment Event in September in Kitchener. There were 20 first and second year resident physicians in attendance, many interested in information about opportunities in the Municipality of Kincardine.

### Onboarding support for new physicians

Work continues to onboard newly signed physicians. It includes planning events to meet the team, ensuring clinic space is ready and equipped as advertised, Ministry paperwork, accommodations acquired, staff hired, information on the rostering process, spousal employment, school tours, day care placements and other needs as they arise.

## Locum Houses

Having housing available for new or visiting physicians is crucial so they can settle in quickly and provide immediate care in the clinic, ER and hospital. Especially in the summer when other options are limited.

Two homes have been provided for locums, medical residents and their families through the generous support of The Society of United Professionals. The Society purchased two homes in Kincardine in 2014 and leased them to the Municipality of Kincardine at no cost for 10 years, the lease ended in 2024. In 10 years over 300 physicians have stayed at the locum houses.

The Society of United Professionals sold the house on McKendrick Drive and in April 2025 will list the house on Weick Blvd. They are planning to continue supporting the Physician Recruitment and Retention Program in Kincardine with the purchase of two condominiums after the sale of the houses is completed.

An MOU and new lease agreement with The Society of United Professionals will be required and brought forward for Council's consideration once available.

## Hawthorne Community Clinic

The new full-time Lead Hand - Building Maintenance position has been extremely helpful in adding staff capacity for repairs and maintenance. New paint was completed in hallways and waiting areas and has freshened the look of the entire clinic.

With three tenants (FHO Physicians Group, Family Health Team and Pharmacy) in the clinic, it is nearly full. There will not be room for 16 physician offices in the clinic or room for more in the future as the number of physicians grows to accommodate community growth.

## Ripley Medical Center

Huron Kinloss has renovated and reopened the Ripley Medical Center.

The Kincardine Family Health Team (KFHT) announced they are offering some of their existing services at the Ripley Medical Centre satellite site, in partnership with the Township of Huron-Kinloss starting January 6th, 2025. An unattached Patient Clinic with Dr. Cescon and Dr. Altaf will operate at the Ripley Medical Centre on Mondays and Thursdays. This service is available only to people who do not have a local family physician.

A variety of KFHT programs and interdisciplinary providers will also visit the Ripley Medical Centre weekly, including Midwife, Occupational Therapist, Dietitian, Kinesiologist, and Registered Nurse. This is due to a lack of space in their current space. The KFHT Same-Day Nurse Practitioner clinic that is partially funded by Kincardine will continue to operate only in Kincardine.

Dr Murray will see his patients in Ripley on Fridays. Prior to Covid the Ripley Medical Centre was used by the Family health team, Dr Knox and Dr Gurbin.

## Regional recruitment

Kincardine is participating as a member of the newly formed regional group: “Grey Bruce Primary Care Recruitment, Retention and Wellness Collaborative” created in June 2024 after the Grey Bruce Owen Sound Recruitment Task Force ceased operations. There have been two meetings so far, in October and December 2024.

The purpose of the Grey Bruce Primary Care Recruitment, Retention, and Wellness Collaborative (GBPCRRWC) is to engage regional stakeholders to actively work together to advance regional primary care recruitment, retention, and wellness initiatives, in alignment with the work of the Grey Bruce Primary Care Network (PCN) and the Grey Bruce Ontario Health Team (OHT).

There will continue to be quarterly meetings which include representation from the Grey Bruce Ontario Health Team (GB-OHT), Bruce Power, CAO of Bruce County, CAO of Grey County, Ontario Health Regional Advisor and community primary care recruitment representatives.

The GBPCRRWC will collaboratively identify regional priorities, both short and long term for primary care recruitment, retention and wellness. This includes plans to:

- Develop a centralized approach to regional recruitment and retention led by a dedicated regional coordinator (central hub) with connections to municipal recruiters and community recruitment groups (spokes) currently in place.
- Develop the materials and pathway for primary care providers interested in practicing in the Grey Bruce region.
- Identify collaborative regional initiatives that support local primary care providers and improve their wellness, avoid duplication of work, reduce local competition for resources, and build an effective regional physician recruitment and retention program.

The Municipality has joined SOPRA Southern Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance in 2023 and includes 17 community physician recruiters working together to attract Canadians studying abroad and doctors from the UK, US, Ireland and Australia and leverage international reach. There has been SOPRA representation and leads gathered at 15 different international career fairs in 2024, each member commits to at least two fairs per year and so far over 1500 physician candidates' information have been collected and the physicians contacted.

This alliance has been expanded to an Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance OPRA, with alliances in Southern, Eastern, Central, Northwestern and Northeastern Ontario.

<https://opra.ca/>

## Healthcare Partnership Program

The Kincardine Saugeen Shores Healthcare Partnership Three Year Pilot Program continues to meet and work on physician recruitment. Current work is focused on recruitment, marketing and promotion. A new video featuring two local Kincardine physicians showcases practicing medicine in Kincardine was completed and will be rolled out in 2025.

## Education Programs

There have been 10 visiting physicians completing their rural residency rotation in Kincardine so far this year. Each resident physician completes two months of primary care, hospital inpatient care and emergency room work. Education is a successful recruitment strategy.

## **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access**

- Promoted dates of significance to acknowledge, create awareness and celebrate the diversity of our community through social media and other communication methods. Target audience is both the public and staff.
- In partnership with community partners and Bruce Power, the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual [Afro Caribbean Awards for youth](#) were held on October 26, 2024. There were over 190 people in attendance this year.
- The Transgender flag was raised for the Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20 to honor the memory of the transgender people whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence and help raise visibility for transgender people.
- Participated in the Grey-Bruce Immigration Partnership.

## **Murals, Banners, Signs, Speakers and Seasonal Lights**

- The new Remembrance Day banners were installed. The veterans featured on the banners were identified by the Legion.
- The seasonal lights for downtown Kincardine light poles were delayed due to the shipping strike. They were installed in December, and we have encountered some issues with the lights. Due to these issues the vendor is replacing all the fixtures in 2025.
- Seasonal lights were purchased and installed in Victoria Park and St. Andrews Park in Tiverton.
- The Municipality of Kincardine hosted a float in the Santa Claus Parade.
- Trim work and cleanup of the 3 Kincardine and 2 Tiverton highway signs was completed this quarter.

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