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Press Release: OMSA Lobby Day 2018, medical students advocating for Physician Services Planning in Ontario

To become a practicing physician in Ontario, medical students must first complete postgraduate medical training as a resident. Residency offers graduates of medical school the opportunity to practice medicine under the direct supervision of an attending physician to become clinical experts in a field of medicine. In their final year of medical school, students apply for residency positions in a process known as “the match.” Historically, 10 to 20 graduates in Canada have gone unmatched each year. However, that number has risen dramatically since 2011, rising to 46 in 2016 and 68 in 2017 and is projected to reach 141 in 2021. 25 residency positions were also eliminated in Ontario in 2015 further increasing the rate of unmatched students. In 2017, there were 35 unmatched medical students in Ontario alone; given that the cost of medical education is highly subsidized by Ontario taxpayers, unmatched graduates represent significant unrealized provincial investment.

This year, medical students in Ontario overwhelmingly voted for the Ontario Medical Students Association (OMSA) to advocate for improved physician services planning for our annual Lobby Day today. OMSA hosted a Lobby Weekend to engage over 60 medical students from across Ontario in our advocacy. Medical students are concerned about their colleagues and friends who need postgraduate training to be certified to practice independently. However, being unmatched means their colleagues have limited professional options, high debt burdens, and enormous risks to their mental well-being. Ontario’s medical students believe that tackling the increasing number of unmatched graduates requires urgent action by many healthcare stakeholders, including the provincial government.

This weekend, medical students heard from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), the Council of Ontario’s Faculty of Medicine (COFM), the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) and the Canadian Medical Association President-Elect Nominee, Dr. Sandy Buchman. Medical students are advocating for improved Physician Services Planning in meetings with Members of Provincial Parliament at Queen’s Park today. Medical students implore the Government of Ontario to create a physician workforce that meets Ontario’s needs, is transparent in its physician services planning to enable medical students’ informed decision-making, and that ensures an adequate number of residency spots for every single Ontario medical graduate.

The number of unmatched medical graduates in Ontario is rising at an alarming rate and is consequently contributing to physician shortages across the province. As a result, Ontario medical students are advocating for their fellow colleagues and future patients today.

For more information on OMSA’s advocacy efforts, please visit www.omsa.ca/en/advocacy-priorities or contact representation@omsa.ca.

Sincerely,



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