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PRESS RELEASE: OMSA's response to Ontario's proposed changes to tuition fees and OSAP

This week, the Government of Ontario announced its intention to reduce tuition by 10 percent and reform the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). These decisions have many implications for the 3000+ medical students across the province's six medical schools. The Ontario Medical Students Association (OMSA) would like to highlight three key points below.

First, **OMSA welcomes the government's intent to address the rise in post-secondary tuition.** Notably, medical school tuition has risen quickly and steadily in this province over the past two decades. Ontario's medical students pay an average of \$25,541 per year in tuition - the most in Canada, nearly doubling the national average. Furthermore, admission into medical school requires a Bachelor's degree, and thus medical trainees often spend seven or more years in post-secondary education. Advocating for reduced tuition has been a priority for OMSA over the past few years, and we appreciate the government's efforts to reduce tuition costs.

Second, OMSA acknowledges that universities are expected to absorb the costs of the tuition cut, a \$360 million shortfall. The Council of Ontario Universities has said that the cut will "negatively affect their ability to provide the best possible learning experience for students." **We ask both the Government of Ontario and the Faculties of Medicine to ensure quality medical training,** and to consult medical students when engaging in budgetary decisions in the coming months.

Lastly, **OMSA is concerned about the proposed reduction in OSAP support,** as many medical students rely on OSAP to finance their education and reduce their debt burden. Key changes that will affect medical students include: overall reductions to OSAP grants and loans; changing the definition of independent student (from four years out of school to six years); and the elimination of interest-free status during the six-month grace period after graduation. **OMSA is particularly concerned about the elimination of full tuition support for students from low-income families.** Students of low socioeconomic status are currently underrepresented in medical school; increasing financial barriers will only further reduce medical student diversity.

OMSA will closely follow these changes and await further details to OSAP reform. We are concerned that the net effect of these changes will be an increased medical student debt load, despite the tuition cut. OMSA hopes to work with universities and the Government of Ontario to address these concerns and support the training of our province's future doctors.

Sincerely,



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