

The number of unmatched medical graduates in Ontario is **rising**.

To become a practicing physician in Ontario, medical students must first complete postgraduate medical training as a resident physician. Students apply for residency positions in their final year of medical students, 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 68 in 2017 (35 in Ontario) and 82 in 2018 (32 in Ontario), and is projected to worsen over time.**

Without postgraduate training, medical school graduates cannot be certified to practice independently, leaving many students with limited professional options, a lack of support, a high debt burden, and large risks to their mental health. Unmatched graduates also result in wasted educational investments in a climate of physician shortages and increasing wait times for healthcare. This crisis is multifaceted, and requires urgent action by many healthcare stakeholders, including the provincial government.

Ontario medical students call on the Government of Ontario to act on the following recommendations:

Principle #1:

Create an adequate number of residency positions for Ontario’s medical graduates

In the past, a buffer between the number of residency positions and applicants accounted for factors such as medical students’ speciality preference and career changes. However, the ratio of available positions to applications has been decreasing since 2011. In 2018, only 1.01 residency positions were available for every Canadian medical graduate.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Establish a minimum ratio of 1.2 postgraduate residency positions per Canadian medical graduate by 2021.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Use the Physician Resource Planning Advisory Committee model to inform allocation of postgraduate residency positions.

Principle #2:

Increase transparency in physician services planning

There is a need for increased transparency between the MOHLTC, undergraduate, and postgraduate medical training programs, and medical students regarding physician services planning. Without reliable projections of physician workforce needs, medical trainees are left unprepared as they plan for post-graduate training, and are unable to factor in job-prospects and the needs of Ontarians into their choices.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Recognize medical students as key stakeholders in physician services planning and directly involve students in decision-making processes.

RECOMMENDATION #2

There must be clear, timely, and consistent communication of physician workforce trends and societal needs by the MOHLTC to students.