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Council pushing for local diagnostics services

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Shelburne Town Council is giving their support to local physicians lobbying for diagnostic imaging services to be brought to the town.

Dr. Micheal Stefanos, a radiologist with Headwaters Hospital in Orangeville, gave a presentation to council about the need for the service in the community, during their meeting on Monday (Oct. 18).

Stefanos noted that growth in population in the town and surrounding areas has led to increasing demands for diagnostic imaging services for North Dufferin patients. He said in many cases patients are travelling to Orangeville, Alliston, Tottenham, Markdale, and Fergus or further depending on the types of studies.

?There's been an identified need for this kind of service in Shelburne for many years,? said Stefanos.

While local physicians have indicated the need for diagnostic imaging services in the community, the process of getting a clinic is complicated. New licenses for diagnostic imaging centre has not been created since the 1980s, which would mean a license would have to be moved from somewhere else in Ontario.

Stefano said Dufferin County is currently considered adequately licensed by the Ministry of Health and that an application to open a clinic would not be considered.

According to data collected from Dufferin Area Family Health Team (DAFHT) in 2019 there were approximately 2,900 tests ordered by local physicians for North Dufferin patients, with growth about 5 to 10 per cent each year.

Dr. Amy Catania, Shelburne Centre for Health, joined Stefano in speaking to council about the direct need for the service.

Catania, who has been a physician in Shelburne for almost nine years, told Council one of the biggest challenges she has faced in moving her practice from Orangeville to Shelburne has been the lack of diagnostic imaging.

?The thing I find the most frustrating for our patients and residents in Shelburne and the surrounding area is the length they have to travel to get these diagnostic tests,? said Catania. ?Unfortunately, they are travelling great length when they're sick.

She added that the lack of service is changing the decisions physicians make on whether to order tests and how they manage patients.

The presentation to council proposed a partnership with the Town to provide services such as X-rays and ultrasounds potentially at the Mel Lloyd Center.

Mayor Wade Mills said prior to the pandemic, himself and Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson were in conversations with Headwaters about the need for the service in Shelburne. He added that there are a number of people living outside the Shelburne boundary that would benefit from a local diagnostic imaging clinic.

?I for one would like to offer whatever help we can at this level because certainly there is a need there,? said Mills.

Town council passed a motion to provide support in the effort by sending a letter to MPP Sylvia Jones, as well as mayors from the

surrounding areas including Melanchthon, Mulmur, Mono, Amaranth and the County of Southgate, regarding the matter.

The letter will also be forwarded to the County of Dufferin.

?This is not just a Town of Shelburne issue, this is really a central to Northern Dufferin County issue,? concluded Mills.