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Local family physicians recognized for providing outstanding care

Written By PAULA BROWN

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Ontario College of Family Physicians (OCFP) is recognizing the outstanding care provided by family physicians across the province.

The Ontario College of Family Physicians announced in a press release on Oct. 17 that nine family doctors in the Dufferin-Caledon area had been recognized by their patients for the outstanding care they've provided.

?What we heard from patients in all corners of the province, including in Dufferin?Caledon, is that family physicians are there for patients, providing care when they need it most,? said Dr. Jobin Varughese, President of the Ontario College of Family Physicians. ?We are thankful for the dedication and care that family physicians show to patients in their communities.?

The recognition is part of a campaign run by the Ontario College of Family Physicians (OCFP) to highlight the essential role of family doctors. During the campaign, Ontarians were asked to tell the OCFP about how their family doctor has gone above and beyond for their care.

According to the Ontario College of Family Physicians, the campaigned received responses with more than 750 family doctors being recognized across the province.

Dr. Jamie Van der Ham of Dufferin Area Family Health Team was among the local physicians in Dufferin County who were recognized in the campaign. He received nominations from four different patients and was among the most of any family doctor in the province.

Dr. Van der Ham was recognized for the outstanding care he provides particularly to an elderly patient who has a challenging cardiovascular condition.

?My husband has an ICD (implantable cardioverter defibrillator) and Dr. Van der Ham is on top of all of his appointments and procedures, and at our age that gives us a real feeling of confidence and security,? said the patient.

Another patient added, ?He is concerned about my health, and I feel so well looked after.?

One more noted, ?My family doctor always follows up with me after any visit. He truly cares about my well-being.?

Dr. Carol Mills, from the Dufferin Area Family Health Team, was also recognized for the care provided to her patients.

?Our family doctor serves my husband and myself, and our two children and grandchildren ? a true family doctor. She is supportive of all of us in our various age brackets, including diagnosing special issues and finding specialists,? said the patient.

In addition to bringing recognition to the essential role that family doctors have in their patients' lives, the OCFP campaign also brought to light the need for more family doctors.

The Ontario College of Family Physicians said they heard from many Ontarians who do not have a family doctor but are in need of one.

According to the Hills of Headwaters Collaborative Ontario Health Team, the estimated number of local community members

needing access to primary and team-based care was over 15,000 as of March 2022.

With the population of the area projected to increase 37 per cent by 2031, Dufferin County and Caledon would require 43 additional family physicians ? 14 for Dufferin County and 29 for Caledon ? in the next seven years to keep up with population growth.

?Family physicians are the foundation of our health care system, and every Ontarian should have access to one,? said Deepy Sur, CEO of the Ontario College of Family Physicians. ?We can get there by ensuring family physicians have the right supports in the right place to allow them to continue to provide patient care.?

At the time of print, there are roughly 2.5 million Ontarians without access to a family doctor.