

## Senators Advocate for Federal Solutions to Family Doctor Shortage

Ottawa, October 1, 2024

Today, Senators Kutcher, Omidvar and Ravalia, in partnership with sector experts, released a report entitled ***“Maximizing Medical Talent: How Canada can increase the supply of family doctors by 50% quickly and cost-effectively”***. The report outlines two cost-effective, actionable steps to address the family physician shortage in a manageable time frame. First, the government must invest to increase residency positions for International Medical Graduates, or IMGs. Second, they should expand the existing Practice Ready Assessment, or PRA, framework into a robust national program.

Canada is facing a primary care crisis. Incredibly, 6.5 million Canadians do not have access to a family doctor, and that number could surge to 10 million within a decade. Canada ranks last among 10 high-income countries in access to primary health care. Family doctors are stretched thin, burnout is skyrocketing, and the consequences for Canadians’ health are becoming increasingly severe.

One of the key drivers of this crisis is our failure to fully utilize the skills of internationally trained physicians already living in Canada. These doctors – who meet all of Canada’s licensing requirements and our rigorous medical standards – remain sidelined due to a lack of residency spots or limited access to Practice Ready Assessments (PRA). This is an issue that must be addressed to help boost Canada’s family doctors by 50%.

### QUOTES

“The country’s health system is overburdened and this is exacerbated by the lack of access to primary care, family doctors in particular. It is only going to worsen if we do not look for alternative solutions to rapidly increase the pool of family doctor. IMGs are an underutilized resource that can be quickly activated.”

- Senator Ratna Omidvar

“Through increasing IMG residency spots, we could increase the number of trained, available family physicians who can help address our current primary care crisis.”

- Senator Dr. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia

“Opening up and funding of more Practice Ready Assessment slots across Canada would open the door for more IMGs to practice in Canada more quickly. This is a fast, cost-effective alternative to a full residency program for qualified physicians. This can be done in 12 weeks versus years.”

- Senator Dr. Stan Kutcher

The report can be accessed here: <http://www.ratnaomidvar.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/IMG-Report-Design-EN.pdf>

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