



City of Port Colborne

Healthcare Advisory Committee Addendum

Date: August 27, 2025
Time: 5:00 pm
Location: Committee Room 3-City Hall
66 Charlotte Street, Port Colborne, Ontario, L3K 3C8

Pages

4. Delegations

*4.2 Gary Gaverluk - 21 Woodside Drive

1

Wednesday August 27, 2025

DELEGATION TO SPECIAL MEETING:

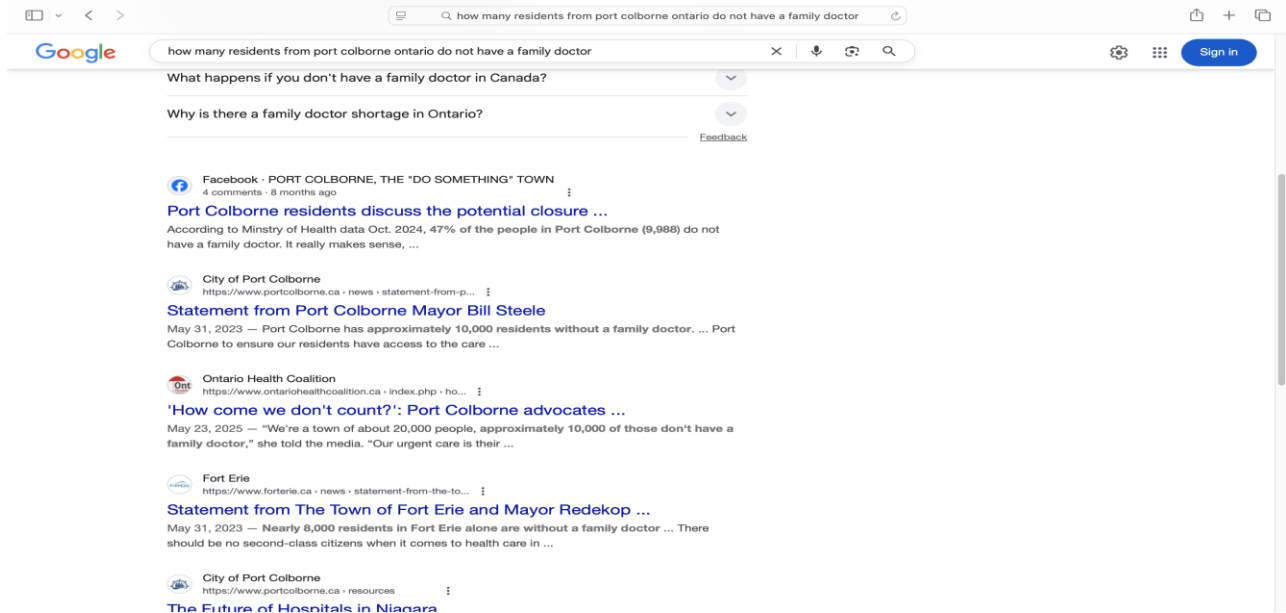
SUBJECT: Port Colborne Citizens Healthcare Advisory Committee –
Clarification specific to the numbers of Port Colborne residents who may or may not have a family Doctor.

Good evening everyone, my name is Gary Gaverluk, I reside with my wife Barbara at 21 Woodside Drive. I was born at the Port Colborne hospital and have lived here all of my life. I am a board member of the Port Colborne Health Coalition.

Over the past several months there has been considerable debate about a representative number of 10,000 being used to identify those residents of Port Colborne who do not have access to a family Physician.

WHY IS THE 10,000 NUMBER REFERENCED SO FREQUENTLY?

As per this screenshot, when searching for the information using Google in this case, there is nothing published that would contradict that number. Therefore, many would naturally assume 10,000 to be correct.



After reviewing our notes and the presentations from the July 9, 2025 Healthcare Advisory Committee meeting I sent the following email to Mr. Boles.

July 17, 2025

Subject: QUESTIONS TO PC CITIZENS HEALTHCARE ADVISORY MEETING JULY 9, 2025

Good afternoon Mr. Boles:

After reviewing the presentations from the July 9th meeting there seems to be a discrepancy with respect to an item in your presentation and a statement made by Mayor Steele at that meeting.

Specific to the number of actual registered Port Colborne residents who are without a family doctor.

- According to your presentation there are approximately 10,000 Port Colborne residents without a family doctor.
- According to a public statement from Mayor Steele dated May 31, 2023, (responding to the reduction in UCC hours) there were at that time, approximately 10,000 Port Colborne residents without a family doctor.
- According to the Ontario Ministry of Health, October 2024 47% of our total Port Colborne population (9,988) are without a family doctor.
- According to Niagara Health News dated May 2, 2025 “PRIMARY CARE IS THE PATH FORWARD” to quote: There are more than 11,000 people in Fort Erie and nearly 10,000 in Port Colborne who do not have access to a family doctor or primary care.
- Apparently at the July 9th meeting Mayor Steele shared a difference of opinion with respect to those numbers, when he said that the number of 10,000 was “inaccurate”, there are only 1,500 to 2,000 that do not have a family doctor. The rest have found doctors outside of Port Colborne.

Could you please reach out to Mayor Steele and clarify those numbers for us?

Mr. Boles did call me and we discussed the contents of my email. We agreed that there needed to be a way to determine the exact number of those who do not have a family doctor. We agreed to stay in contact and that I would continue to do my research.

RESEARCH RESULTS:

During the Canal Days weekend, we (Betty Konc and myself) had an opportunity to engage with Mr. Jeff Burch, our MPP.

We asked Mr. Burch if there was any way to find out from the Ministry of Health or from any other agency if the most commonly published and used number of 10,000 in Port Colborne without a family doctor is or is not correct?

Mr. Burch directed his assistant Matthew Mengia to contact the Ontario Legislative Research Department to get an answer for us.

On Monday August 18, 2025 we received the following information:

Thank you for reaching out, attached is the response I received from the legislative research department.

You recently asked the library for help with the following request

Number of people in Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold and Fort Erie without a family doctor and how many family doctors are needed within these cities.

OMA Primary Care Report

The Ontario Medical Association (OMA) is the representative of Ontario physicians and produces reports on the state of physician care in Ontario. A recent [report published in 2024 by OMA](#) on primary care provides an [interactive map](#) reporting the number of people without a family doctor in Ontario by municipality and riding. Unattached patient population data for each municipality was taken from the [INSPIRE-PHC website](#). The most recent year available by city is from 2022; however, [data for all of Ontario is from 2023](#) and has reported 2.52 million Ontarians do not have a family doctor.

I have extracted unattached patient data from the map for the requested cities:

Port Colborne:

- Unattached Patients 2022: 2,614
- Population 2022: 17, 762
- Estimated Family Doctor Shortage 2022: 2.051

Welland

- Unattached Patients 2022: 5,198
- Population 2022: 33,997
- Estimated Family Doctor Shortage 2022: 4.078

Thorold

- Unattached Patients 2022 : 3,778
- Population: 17, 705
- Estimated Family Doctor Shortage 2022 : 2.964

Fort Erie

- Unattached Patients 2022: 10,516
- Population 2022: 80, 741
- Estimated Family Doctor Shortage 2022: 8.249

Of potential interest is viewing the above data at Riding level:

Niagara Centre

- Unattached Patients 2022: 14, 150
- Estimated Doctor Shortage 2022: 11. 10

The report does not specify how many family doctors are needed to fill the shortage by municipality. It does make the claim that “3500 family doctors” are currently needed in Ontario.

Niagara Physician Recruitment Program

The Niagara [Physician Recruitment Program](#) works to attract, retain, and support family physicians in Niagara to address primary care shortages. An [update report](#) published July 23, 2025 for Port Colborne. The report includes physician recruitment data by municipality, including the [number of doctors each Niagara municipality is short](#). I have extracted the data on the number of doctors each requested city is short below:

Fort Erie: 10

Port Colborne: 5

Thorold: 7

Welland: 7

Matthew Mengia

Executive Assistant

Member of Provincial Parliament Jeff Burch

IN SUMMARY:

From the information received, the most commonly used number of 10,000 said to be representative for those residents from Port Colborne who are without a family physician is not correct.

From the information received, as of 2022 the number of 2,614 is a more representative number for those residents from Port Colborne who are without a family physician.

Moving forward, in light of this new information the Port Colborne Health Coalition will make every effort to promote the correct number of those who are without access to a family physician.

However, there is one shortfall that needs to be discussed. For those with access to a family doctor, there is no way to determine if their doctor practices in Port Colborne or elsewhere.

For example: A person or family has relocated to Port Colborne from a city such as Barrie. When they left that community, they were registered with a practicing doctor there.

Question is, do they still have a family doctor?

Does anyone in Port Colborne really have a family doctor after 8pm?

For your consideration.

Thank you,