

For immediate release

NEWS RELEASE

**Improving seniors' health care, reducing wait times and investing in hospitals are top priorities to improv health care in Barrie/Muskoka, Ontario Medical Association interim public survey results show**

*Betterhealthcare.ca survey still open for area residents to make their voice heard on local health care issues*

BARRIE, Ont. Aug. 19, 2021 – Improving health care for seniors and investing in new hospitals, clinics and health-care facilities to improve access are the most important ways to improve health care in the Barrie area and Muskoka, interim results of one of the most comprehensive consultations in the 140-year history of the Ontario Medical Association show.

In the public survey that is central to the OMA consultation, one question asked people to identify their top priority for improving local health care other than dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. One-quarter (25 per cent) of the 387 area residents who responded identified seniors' health care, including home care and long-term care. The same number (25 per cent) per cent identified reducing wait times as their top priority and 20 per cent identified more doctors as their top priority.

In a second question, residents were asked what "what is the single most important thing that can be done to improve health-care services in your community today?" Forty-one per cent chose "invest in new hospitals, clinics and medical facilities to improve access" and 27 per cent chose "make it easier to get an appointment with my doctor."

"These findings are incredibly important in helping us at the OMA develop a plan to improve health care and create a more integrated and sustainable system for all Ontarians," said Dr. Sohal Goyal, chair of the local OMA district. "This is a huge province and health-care priorities here can be very different from those in other regions like Toronto. By completing this public survey, you help make the voice of the Barrie area and Muskoka heard."

Among other survey results specific to the Barrie area and Muskoka:

- More than half of those who responded (58 per cent) said their views of the way local health care is delivered have become worse due to the pandemic, 10 per cent said their views have improved and 32 per cent said their views were unchanged.
- When asked to grade the local health care system on a scale of A, B, C or F, 25 per cent of those who responded gave it a B, 49 per cent gave it a C and 24 per cent gave it a failing grade. Three per cent gave it an A.
- Almost half (46 per cent) of those who responded said the government should give improving health care in this community the same priority as economic recovery from the pandemic and more than a third (38 per cent) said it should be given the highest priority, above all other issues.
- Forty-three per cent of those who responded said that the health-care issues that were important to them and their community were not being discussed at all and the same number said that they were somewhat being discussed.

- When asked to choose the statement that best reflected their views on the way health care is delivered in their community, 30 per cent selected “we don’t have enough doctors” and 29 per cent selected “we need to do more to keep people healthy and out of doctors’ offices.”

More than 7,400 residents in more than 600 communities across Ontario have completed the survey to date. It is part of a broad consultation process that has involved doctors, nurses and other health-care professionals as well as community leaders. The OMA will release its plan to improve health care based on the consultation process this fall.

**There is still time for area residents to make their voice heard. The survey will remain open through the Labour Day weekend at [betterhealthcare.ca](http://betterhealthcare.ca)**

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### **About the OMA**

The Ontario Medical Association represents Ontario’s 43,000 plus physicians, medical students and retired physicians, advocating for and supporting doctors while strengthening the leadership role of doctors in caring for patients. Our vision is to be the trusted voice in transforming Ontario’s health-care system.

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