



**WAASEGIIZHIG**  
NANAANDAWE'YEWIGAMIG

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **WNHAC Supports Calls to Act on Rural Generalist Care Funding**

Kenora, ON September 10, 2024 – [Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig](https://www.wnhac.org) (WNHAC) stands in solidarity with its All Nations Health Partners in an urgent call for the Ministry of Health to support a new model for Rural Generalist Care in the Kenora area.

As a key provider of primary health care in the region since 1998, we echo concerns about the growing physician shortage, and the critical threat poses to health and well-being in the communities we serve.

Without consistent access to primary care providers, people are forced to rely on the emergency department for care. The hospital currently depends on costly locum physicians to fill physician gaps, which is not financially sustainable and cannot provide the continuity of care that stable, local staffing offers. Despite collaborative initiatives, Kenora is unable to compete with other areas to successfully recruit and retain enough physicians to our region. The local physician group is now in crisis, adding even greater pressure to the Emergency Department at Lake of the Woods District Hospital and putting it on the brink of closure. This would be absolutely devastating for the region.

“We are deeply concerned about the impact the deepening crisis will have on First Nation communities, which already experience inequities in accessing health care”, said WNHAC Board President Charlene Mandamin.

As a founding partner of the All Nations Health Partners and the Ontario Health Team (ANHP OHT), we are deeply committed to sustainable solutions that address the health needs of the communities we serve. Without a timely response from the Ministry of Health, we are profoundly concerned about further erosion to local healthcare, including the potential closure of the Lake of the Woods District Hospital Emergency Department.

We echo calls for the Ministry of Health to support the proposed Rural Generalist Care model. This model ensures equitable access to physician care for all including rural and First Nation communities. Developed collaboratively by local physicians, healthcare organizations, and First Nations leadership, it represents the best path forward to secure long-term continuity of care for people in Kenora and surrounding communities.

Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig joins our community partners in urging the Ministry of Health to act swiftly to support this locally driven solution and prevent further jeopardy to healthcare services in our region.

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