

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - JUNE 20, 2005

NURSE PRACTITIONERS AND PRIMARY HEALTH-CARE RENEWAL

Recommendation

Councillor Tony Carella recommends adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas nurse practitioners have proven that they play an important role in the delivery of primary health care, not only in diagnosing and treating patients for common ailments, but also in health promotion and disease prevention;

And Whereas nurse practitioners practice in health-care settings ranging from community centres and health clinics, to medical practices, hospitals and long-term care facilities;

And Whereas the municipality is a direct stakeholder in the local primary health-care delivery system through contributions to the funding of institutions, and representation on hospital, public health agency and nursing home boards, as well as through the provision of emergency response services;

And Whereas healthier communities are stronger communities that are better able to foster economic development and attract residents of all ages;

And Whereas it is critical that timely and appropriate primary health-care services be available in our communities;

And Whereas good public alleviates long-term demands on the health system;

And Whereas it is recognized that a collaborative, team-based care model that is patient-centred is an effective and desirable model for the delivery of primary care to both patients and their families;

And Whereas the *Health Accord 2003* prioritized timely access to family and community care through primary health-care teams that included nurse practitioners for all federal, provincial and territorial governments;

Therefore be it resolved that the municipality send a letter to the Premier and Minister of Health to request:

- 1) that legislation supports the sustained integration of nurse practitioners in primary health-care reform;
- 2) that collaborative models of health services delivery be pursued;
- 3) that jurisdictional health human resource plans, to be published by December 31st, 2005, include an appropriate complement of nurse practitioners; and
- 4) that health human resource plans include targets for training, recruitment, and retention of all health professionals including nurse practitioners.

And further that the municipal administration contact area health-care agencies and institutions to determine the extent to which nurse practitioners are being employed, or are planned to be employed, in the local delivery of primary health care and to report back to council with the findings.

Economic Impact

Nil.

Purpose

To express the support of the Council of the City of Vaughan for Primary Health Care Renewal in Ontario, particularly in respect of the role of nurse practitioners.

Background - Analysis and Options

A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse with additional education in health assessment, diagnosis and management of illness and injuries. NPs work collaboratively with other health professionals such as family physicians, registered nurses, therapists, nutritionists, social workers and pharmacists. Their practice emphasizes health promotion and disease prevention.

Increasingly, nurse practitioners are being recognized as a practical solution to improving public access to quality health care. Their training and method of practice make them uniquely qualified for the interdisciplinary, patient-centred approach to health care that governments are encouraging. NPs provide care in diverse health-care settings from community centres and health clinics, to hospitals, medical practices and nursing homes.

Flowing from the *Health Accord* of 2003, Health Canada is funding the Canadian Nurse Practitioner Initiative (CNPI). The Canadian Nurses Association is leading this initiative with the goal of achieving the sustained integration of NPs in the primary health-care system across Canada. The CNPI will end in March 2006, at which time an *NP National Framework* will be released.

Governments at all levels are exploring the use of nurse practitioners to help address access problems and wait-times. This issue is vitally important to municipalities since frontline delivery of primary care takes place in communities such as yours. Municipalities are direct and indirect stakeholders as they contribute to the funding of local health-care institutions and also contribute to local health-care decision-making. The quality of community health-care and timely access to these health services contribute significantly to the quality of life of Canadians in every city and town,

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan strongly supports Primary Health Care Renewal through the integration of nurse practitioners in primary health care.

Attachments

Draft letter to Premier and Minister of Health

Report prepared by:

Tony Carella
Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Tony Carella

Draft letter to Premier and Minister of Health

Dear: Premier Dalton McGuinty and Minister George Smitherman

Re: Nurse Practitioners and Primary Health-Care Renewal

The Council of City of Vaughan strongly supports the sustained integration of nurse practitioners (NPs) in primary health care.

Our council views the increased use of nurse practitioners as an appropriate and practical solution to reducing wait-times and improving access to quality health care for our citizens.

The enclosed resolution contains specific reasons for our decision to support a larger role for nurse practitioners in front line, community health care.

We respectfully request that the Province of Ontario include sufficient numbers of nurse practitioners in the province's *Health Human Resource Plan*. By recognizing the vital role that NPs can play in health care renewal, you will be providing valuable support for the strengthening of primary health care in our communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Mayor