



# Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF FORT ERIE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Official Statement from The Town of Fort Erie and Mayor Wayne Redekop regarding Urgent Care Services in Fort Erie and Port Colborne**

**FORT ERIE (May 31, 2023)**

"The Town of Fort Erie is deeply concerned with the Niagara Health announcement to reduce by half Urgent Care Services at Douglas Memorial and its Port Colborne site, effective July 5th. Hours of operation starting that date will be from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. While we understand that Niagara Health faces some very real health human resource shortages within its emergency departments, urgent cares and other health & diagnostic services, these service reductions significantly affect every Fort Erie resident.

Nearly 8,000 residents in Fort Erie alone are without a family doctor, so their first point of contact with the health care system is in an Urgent Care or Emergency Department. Until we can provide residents with access to family doctors or local solutions to meet their health service needs, they will continue to need local Urgent Care services, or they will continue to overload our Emergency Departments elsewhere in Niagara.

We need the province to take action on the "state of our emergencies" and avoid further consequences and failures of our provincial health care system to provide quality health care that Fort Erie and all Ontarians need and deserve. There should be no second-class citizens when it comes to health care in Ontario.

Fort Erie residents have faced this troubling health crisis since 1997 when repeated reductions to local health services began as part of hospital system consolidation and short-sighted, government-driven cost reductions. The province and provincial leaders for the past three decades have known about the growing demands for health services as our population aged and grew, yet there has not been a planned effort to increase the health care human resources by expanding educational capacity in medical, nursing and allied health programs to generate sufficient professionals to serve our population needs or provide the funding necessary for the effective delivery of health care services to residents.

As a result of this long-standing inaction, we are in a state of health care crisis. The

residents of Fort Erie and Ontario deserve better. Unsurprisingly, communities and residents are generating passionate protests and reactions to these service reduction announcements. Niagara Health and the provincial government need to step up and meet the needs of residents, not remove more and more necessary services. It is time for them to take meaningful action to address the worsening crisis. The Town of Fort Erie and Town Council are committed to fighting for the health care services that our residents need and deserve."

For more information, please contact Mayor Wayne Redekop at 905-323-5159.

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