

*THIS NEWS RELEASE IS SENT ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY PHYSICIAN
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION COMMITTEE*

**DR. ERIN PEPPER TO JOIN THE COBOURG MEDICAL CENTRE IN JANUARY 2009 – NEW
PATIENT INTAKE TO BEGIN NOVEMBER 12, 2008**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, MONDAY, November 10, 2008 – The members of the Community Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee (CPRRC) are pleased to announce the successful recruitment of another family physician to our area, Dr. Erin Pepper. Currently dividing her time between “locum” or fill-in opportunities with local family medicine practices and the Emergency Department (ED) at Northumberland Hills Hospital, Dr. Pepper recently confirmed that she will be joining the Cobourg Medical Centre on Burnham St. in Cobourg. She will begin seeing new patients in her family practice this January, and also plans to continue her work in the hospital, both through shifts in the ED and through obstetrical care for her patients.

“I grew up in this area, and I’m very pleased to be returning to practice medicine,” said Dr. Pepper, who graduated from CDCI East in Cobourg. “There are many opportunities for family physicians today, and a number of communities appealed to me, particularly in the north, where I had an opportunity to work during my training. I love Lake Ontario, though, and this area has so much to offer both professionally and personally. I’m really looking forward to building my practice in west Northumberland.”

Dr. Pepper is well aware of the fact that many people are without a family physician in west Northumberland. For this reason she plans to focus on “orphan” patients (those without a physician). That said, Dr. Pepper will also accept self-referrals for obstetrical care for pregnant women whose current physicians do not deliver babies.

Local residents currently without a family physician may call the Cobourg Medical Centre at 905-373-8333, beginning November 12, to request a spot with Dr. Pepper on her clinic’s patient roster. Patients are asked to call on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays only, as staff will be on-hand on those days to process the calls.

Patients will be contacted by the Cobourg Medical Centre staff for an introductory appointment. Dr. Pepper cautions that it could take several months before all patients accepted into her practice will receive their first calls.

“While every doctor wants to work in a community where their services are needed, the prospect of being flooded with callers is a challenge—both for me and the practice I’m joining! I thank everyone in advance for their patience as I try my best to bring as many into my practice as possible.”

“The CPRRC committee was introduced to Dr. Pepper several years ago when she was at the hospital on a student rotation,” said Mary-Jo Bathe, CPRRC recruitment coordinator. “Many conversations have occurred since then, to keep west Northumberland top-of-mind; we’re very pleased to see that she has decided to bring her talents to us!”

Born in Cobourg in 1978, Dr. Pepper grew up in the area. She completed an undergraduate degree in Physiotherapy at McGill University in Montreal and attended medical school at McMaster.

A poll conducted this summer by the Ontario College of Family Physicians (OCFP) estimates that between 663,000 and 879,000 Ontarians are without a family doctor, including almost a quarter of a million who are over the age of 50. Here in west Northumberland, the CPRRC estimates that 10,000 – 12,000 individuals are currently without a family physician, translating to an immediate need for five to seven family physicians. Another five physicians will be required to replace those expected to retire over the next five years, the Committee estimates.

Dr. Pepper is the third family physician successfully recruited to the area by the CPRRC. Dr. Stacey Jennings (currently practicing in Cobourg) and Dr. Colin Dahle (completing his studies) were also attracted to the area with the help of the efforts of the CPRRC. Dr. Dahle expects to open his practice in the new year. Details will follow regarding the process for intake at his clinic when plans are finalized. A fourth family physician has also relocated to the area. He too is working in the Emergency Department of the Northumberland Hills Hospital and he is finalizing his plans in the community. An announcement regarding opportunities with this physician's practice are expected shortly.

Says Joan Ross, outgoing President and CEO of the Northumberland Hills Hospital, and a member of the CPRRC: "Thanks to the arrival of physicians like Dr. Pepper and several others on the immediate horizon, we're well on our way to stable physician staffing levels in the Emergency Department. We should be fully staffed by June 2009. This will reduce the hospital's projected deficit, as we can cut back on our reliance on expensive outside agency support to staff our ED."

About the Community Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee

Formed in 2001, the Community Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee (CPRRC) is a volunteer group of citizens representing community agencies and businesses, municipalities, physicians and the Northumberland Hills Hospital. Chaired by local resident Kim Rudd, the Committee's mandate is to attract new family physicians to the area and to lead efforts helpful in retaining the excellent family physicians working in our communities today.