

## **Smitherman Right to Impose Deal on Doctors**

Medical Reform Group

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The Medical Reform Group believes the Ontario government should move forward with its initiatives to revamp the health care system despite the Ontario Medical Association voting down a contract loaded with incentives to stimulate this vital transformation.

“The OMA negotiators thought they had a good deal for doctors, and a good deal for the people of Ontario,” said MRG spokesperson Dr. Gordon Guyatt. “They were right. This deal was defeated because of a highly effective propaganda campaign waged by a small number of misguided physicians.”

Doctors are the highest paid health professionals. As usual, this deal gave them more in the way of increases than other health care workers are likely to get in upcoming negotiations with the government.

“The doctors who rejected the deal are swimming against the tide of progressive change in health care,” said MRG spokesperson Dr. Yves Talbot. “Primary care reform has moved at a glacial pace. That’s in large part because of resistance of the doctors, and their rejecting the deal is just one more episode in that resistance. It’s become evident that the only way to get doctors on board is to give them a financial incentive. This agreement provides that incentive, and it’s the first time we have real political will for primary care reform.”

The government has a number of options, ranging from imposing the contract against the OMA’s will to going back to the negotiating table. The Medical Reform Group believes the government should consider all of its options, including offering the contract individually to the 40% of doctors who endorsed it or offering the most transformative aspects of the contract to the entire profession.

“The contract had a number of progressive features that would improve patient care,” commented Dr. Guyatt. “With the cooperation of the 40% of doctors who voted for the deal, the government should ensure that these elements are put in place as soon as possible.”