

Nearsighted Physicians Reject Deal With Government

Medical Reform Group

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The Medical Reform Group believes that Ontario doctors have made a serious error in rejecting the deal negotiated with the provincial government.

“The deal was not perfect,” said MRG spokesperson Dr. Ahmed Bayoumi. “For one thing, the government and OMA were making health policy without consulting other constituencies. But the policy they were making, particularly the moves toward primary health care reform, was good policy.”

Doctors are by far the highest paid health professionals. Yet, there is a large income gradient between primary care doctors and specialists. The profession has shown itself incapable of dealing with this problem alone. This deal would have begun to redress the gradient, and potentially make primary care more attractive to young physicians.

“Primary care reform has moved at a glacial pace”, said another MRG spokesperson, Dr. Rosana Pellizzari. “It’s become evident that the only way to get doctors on board is to give them a financial incentive. This agreement would have provided that incentive.”

The government and the profession now have a big problem. With other health workers being asked to hold demands for wage increases, providing substantial new income to the highest paid workers is a problem.

“Hopefully, the OMA and the government will be able to patch up a deal that retains the progressive elements of the agreement the doctors have rejected,” concluded Dr. Bayoumi. “If not, primary care will remain in big, big trouble.”