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MAY 04 2018

Dr. Jordan Cheskes
President
Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
PO Box 82857 RPO Cabbagetown
Toronto ON M5A 3Y2

Dear Dr. Cheskes:

Thank you for submitting the Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (EPSO) report entitled "Ensuring Access and Excellence in Cataract Surgery" to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the "ministry") on February 21, 2018. The report provides recommendations regarding access to cataract surgery and measures to expand practice opportunities for new graduates. We would like to thank the EPSO for preparing this report, and we are pleased to provide an update on actions taken that address these recommendations and next steps to ensure further progress in this regard.

Firstly, we are pleased to inform you that as part of the 2018 Ontario Budget, the province is investing an additional \$822 million in 2018-19 in hospitals, contributing to a 4.6 percent growth in funding. This increased investment will among other things, increase access to services and reduce wait times.

This investment includes an additional \$2.3 million in base funding for 4,523 more cataract surgeries to help address the demands of a growing and aging population. In addition to this, based on the advice of the Provincial Vision Task Force, the Budget provided a further one-time investment of \$2.8 million for 5,403 more cataract surgeries to significantly reduce the backlog of patients on the waiting list and make further progress towards meeting the provincial access target. In total, these investments increase the number of cataract surgeries by more than 8% compared to the previous year.

As part of the administration of this additional funding, the ministry has provided terms and conditions to Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs). For all new incremental cataract surgery volumes, hospitals will be required to complete their base volumes (set to 2017-18 actual volumes completed) in order to be eligible for this additional funding. This will ensure that incremental volumes are performed in addition to base volumes (similar to the terms and conditions for Wait Time Strategy funding). This will help to ensure that this funding achieves its intended objectives to increase access and reduce wait times.

Dr. Jordan Cheskes

The ministry also understands the importance of ensuring that Ontario's highly skilled ophthalmology graduates are able to transition effectively into clinical practice and deliver services to their full potential, including the provision of cataract surgery. To this end, the ministry has informed LHINs through their 2018-19 funding letter that it will work with partners to develop and implement a plan to link incremental volumes to the recruitment of new ophthalmology surgeon graduates in select hospital sites across the province. Starting in the 2019-20 fiscal year, these volumes, in select sites, will be contingent on new graduate recruitment. This condition will help to address the EPSO's recommendation regarding expanding practice opportunities for new graduates.

As you know, the Provincial Vision Task Force is a highly specialized group of ophthalmological sub-specialties, health system researchers and administrators that provides advice to the ministry on key health system priorities to improve quality, access, and system integration of ophthalmology services in Ontario. In November 2017, the Task Force submitted its Cataract Capacity Plan to the ministry, which also contained recommendations regarding access to care and measures to improve the recruitment of new graduates.

We were happy to facilitate the EPSO's presentation of your report to the Task Force at its March 23 meeting. We will ensure that the Task Force works closely with the EPSO in the development of a recruitment plan and to explore opportunities to accelerate progress at hospitals that may be ready for faster voluntary implementation in the 2018/19 fiscal year. The ministry participates on the Task Force and looks forward to participating in this planning together with you.

Thank you again for sharing your report and for your commitment to high-quality ophthalmology care in Ontario.

Sincerely,



Melissa Farrell
Assistant Deputy Minister



Lynn Guerriero
Assistant Deputy Minister

- c: Ms. Nancy Naylor, Associate Deputy Minister, Delivery and Implementation, MOHLTC
- Ms. Fredrika Scarth, Director, HQO Liaison and Program Development Branch, MOHLTC
- Mr. David Clarke, Director, Negotiations Branch, MOHLTC
- Dr. Phil Hooper, Co-Chair, Provincial Vision Task Force
- Ms. Jill Tettmann, Co-Chair, Provincial Vision Task Force
- Ms. Marnie Weber, Administrative Lead, Provincial Vision Task Force