

Community Role in Retention

Physician, Spouse or Partner, and Family Support

In order to successfully retain physicians in our province, the whole family needs to be considered. The spouse or partner and family play a critical role in the decision to pick a community and an even greater role in the decision to stay. Community members should develop relationships with the families during the initial visits and maintain these relationships in a genuine but respectful way.

Social networks are key to your social identity and to achieving a healthy work-life balance. If a physician and their family are new to a community, connecting them with social networks is important. Talk openly about the recreational activities and cultural events that go on in your community and if they seem interested, include them in plans or find a local family to help introduce them.

The Culture Innovation

Fund: Healthy Communities Stream is available to community leaders thinking strategically about retention and how to weave new physicians and their families into the fabric of their community.

One of the largest reasons physicians leave a community is spouse or partner dissatisfaction. Successful communities understand that the partner's career aspirations or social interests are just as important as those of the physician. It is important to help members of the physician's family find opportunities so they can also build on a rewarding career and life in your community.

Spousal employment is often a very important consideration for the physician. Be especially sensitive to the fact they are a person in their own right. Community members can aid in developing a list of quality career opportunities for the spouse or partner, acting as a network connection to the broader professional community. Connect them to recreational or volunteer opportunities that get them out and involved in the community!

“Our need is immediate but this is a long game ultimately.”

Pugwash, NS



Candidate Sourcing & Outreach



Do you know of a local community member that is in medical school in another province? Is someone you know doing their residency somewhere else? Perhaps you know of a physician working in a large city and starting a family who might be looking for the pace of life better afforded by Nova Scotia...

Many times local communities know of residents who are studying for medicine or health professions, or already practicing elsewhere. Communities can help identify candidates that might be recruited to come home.

We want to hear from you and know about these candidates to try to recruit them!

Send your suggestions to:
physicianrecruit@nshealth.ca.

Some communities have reached out to candidates by sending them annual holiday cards or gift from home, taking them out to lunch when they visit, or offering to help find meaningful work for their partner over a summer break. All of these contribute to building an irresistible connection to home, and help encourage a relocation decision in the future!

Community Support & Engagement



Physician appreciation is a key component to the retention strategy, and the community can have a great impact on how we deliver this. For example, May 1 is National Physician Appreciation day - a perfect opportunity to make your physicians feel valued by the entire community.

Other retention activities community members or committees can get involved with include:

- Connect new physicians with a mentor
- Hold physician socials
- Host hospital/clinic events
- Provide teaching opportunities
- Invite physicians to sit on the local physician recruitment and retention committees
- Connect with local newspaper for a “Physicians Corner” piece that profiles and highlights physicians in the community

Diversity

Physicians who come to work in our province are from many diverse cultural backgrounds. Some are entering our province—and even country—for the first time. Nova Scotia is a predominately white and English/French speaking province and often practices Christianity. Our province is becoming more diverse and we have received feedback from our physicians that sometimes they don't feel accepted or understood, or that they can see themselves having a place in our community or facility.

One thing you can offer to help improve our acceptance of diverse and valued professionals, is to offer regular diversity training to all community members on topics such as:

- Different religious practices
- Different sexual orientation and gender identities
- Cultural practices from around the world
- How to welcome without being intrusive



Medical Learners

NSH has created a new recruitment consultant position that focuses on medical learners from Dalhousie University and other universities. The priority is to show medical learners just how important they are to Nova Scotia from the very first day they enter medical school right through their residency and into practice. It is important to share with learners the many different community and practice options and to expose them to potential mentors and future colleagues as early as possible.

Medical learners are different from other potential leads. They have been working and studying here in the province and have built some connections during this time.

This recruitment role seeks to strengthen those connections, broaden their network, and provide the support they need. We want them to see themselves practicing alongside their peers. Our new resident recruitment consultant will be the single point of contact throughout a medical learner's education and residency.

If you know a medical learner that you think would be a great fit in your community, email physicianrecruit@nshealth.ca to let our resident recruitment consultant know.

Community Support & Engagement with Medical Learners

What can we do as a community to support recruiting medical learners?

- Attend or organize job fairs in schools in your community to introduce medical careers to middle and high school students early on
- Help students find housing accommodations and recreational entertainment – learn their hobbies and connect them with friendly local people who share the same interests
- Build and support a relationship with Dalhousie Medical School. Work with universities in your community to improve incentives for medical career interest and bursaries for those going off to pursue a medical degree across the province
- Work with the province to include these incentives to students, even those students leaving the province
- Increase community exposure to medical learners
- Medical schools often host a Rural Week for students to gain experience working with a local physician in a smaller community practice. Find out if they visit your area and help host events and connect medical students and residents with preceptors and community members to learn about opportunities in your area.
- NOW Lunenburg County is actively working to integrate medical learners in their region. They hosted a bike ride during Rural Week on their groomed trails, and also partnered with Dalhousie Medical School's Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship program by helping students find housing and entertainment in the area.
- Ensure your community website and social media pages include information relevant to medical learners
- Respect diversity of physician learners

How can we ensure that medical learners have a good experience in our community?

- Provide a welcome package with information about community programs, events, and resources
- Provide a welcome event for physician learners that includes community partners and leaders
- Connect with learners in residency programs based in your community to get to know their interests and needs, including their family's needs, and tailor their experience
- Assess how medical learners are doing by extending invitations to informal and formal events, providing transportation assistance, offering spousal support, etc.
- Conduct exit interviews to assess physician learner experiences and how to improve recruitment and retention efforts
- Build awareness in the community about the role and importance of physician learners
- Ensure good physical space for learners
- Streamline processes for recruitment and placements

