

Healthcare Practitioner Community Support Toolkit

**A resource to support the settlement
of health professionals**



Executive Summary

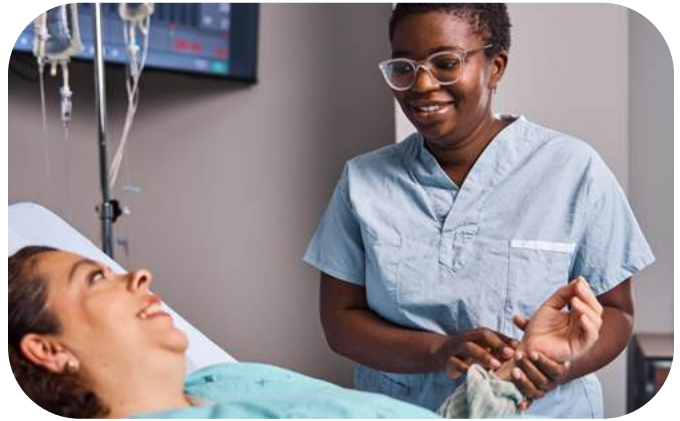
The shortage of healthcare practitioners poses a significant challenge globally. Through extensive research and direct engagement with healthcare professionals, key factors that may support the recruitment and retention of health practitioners have been identified. To address some of these factors, the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency, in collaboration with communities, have developed a toolkit, aimed at supporting healthcare workforce retention and inclusion efforts at the local level.

While the responsibility for recruitment and retention of health practitioners lies with provincial health entities, feedback from practitioners indicates community involvement plays a crucial role in the successful integration of healthcare practitioners and their long-term retention. As a result, many rural and remote communities have taken proactive steps to showcase their area as an attractive place to live and work, and have offered support with housing, partner/spouse employment, and social connections.

Other actions that contribute to recruitment and retention efforts may include:

- Financial support,
- Cultivating a culture of appreciation,
- Embracing diversity and offering cultural connection,

Understanding the specific needs of healthcare practitioners and their families is essential for successful community inclusion.



The Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency is a key partner in our health system. We work with the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, all affiliates and our Ministry of Health, to deliver the Government of Saskatchewan's Health Human Resource Strategy.

An important part of our mandate is community collaboration to support the successful recruitment, settlement and retention of all health practitioners, especially those new to our province and country.

Over the past year, through direct engagement with Saskatchewan municipal leaders and local organizations, we know communities want to support health practitioners to ensure area residents have access to the health services they need as close to home as possible. This Healthcare Practitioner Community Support Toolkit is just one way to share information, ideas and successes. As a living document, it is intended to evolve with new content as more is learned.

We look forward to your feedback. We will continue to engage, collaborate with and support Saskatchewan communities in our shared goal to recruit and retain healthcare practitioners in our province.

Message from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

Photo credit: Tourism Saskatchewan



Saskatchewan rural municipalities (RMs) are rooted in the traditions of lending a hand, helping one another, and welcoming newcomers with genuine warmth. This strength of community and resilience have kept rural Saskatchewan both vibrant and strong.

As new healthcare workers arrive in our rural communities, whether from other parts of Saskatchewan, across Canada, or overseas, it is an opportunity to make sure they feel part of the fabric of our towns. Moving to a new place can be daunting, but when we come together to offer support, inclusivity and appreciation for their work, these professionals and their families can truly feel at home.

SARM is willing to support the efforts of the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency (SHRA) in the creation of the new Healthcare Practitioner Community Support Toolkit. The toolkit is designed to help rural municipalities attract and retain healthcare workers. Healthcare professionals are not just essential to the well-being of our people— they also enrich the social and cultural fabric of our communities. By ensuring they feel connected to our communities and valued for their efforts, we create the foundation for long-term relationships that benefit everyone.

This toolkit recognizes the key role rural municipalities, and their residents play in welcoming these workers. From hosting community events to offering guidance on local resources, we can make sure new arrivals experience the best of Saskatchewan hospitality. When healthcare professionals feel at home in their new communities, they are more likely to stay, ensuring continued access to vital services for all of us.

Together, let us keep building vibrant, welcoming communities where everyone—from longtime residents to newcomers—feel they belong. Saskatchewan's rural spirit can continue to thrive by strengthening our connections and supporting those who care for us for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Huber".

Bill Huber
Acting President of Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

Message from Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association

Photo credit: Tourism Saskatchewan



Saskatchewan's urban municipalities are built on a foundation of collaboration, inclusivity, and a shared commitment to strong, thriving communities. As healthcare workers arrive in our cities, towns, and villages—whether from across Saskatchewan, Canada, or internationally—it is essential that they feel welcomed and supported. The success of our communities depends not only on essential services like healthcare but also on fostering a sense of belonging for those who provide them.

The Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) is pleased to support the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency (SHRA) in the development of the Healthcare Practitioner Community Support Toolkit. This initiative will help urban municipalities attract and retain healthcare professionals by providing strategies to build welcoming and supportive communities. Healthcare workers are integral to the well-being of our residents and contribute to the economic and social vibrancy of our cities, towns, and villages.

SUMA recognizes that municipalities play a key role in integrating healthcare professionals into our communities. From hosting welcoming events to providing information on local resources and services, urban municipalities have the opportunity to demonstrate the warmth and hospitality Saskatchewan is known for. When healthcare professionals and their families feel at home, they are more likely to build long-term connections, ensuring sustainable and high-quality healthcare for our residents.

We look forward to working together to make Saskatchewan's urban municipalities places where healthcare professionals feel valued, supported, and inspired to stay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jean-Marc Nadeau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jean-Marc Nadeau, PhD., CMgr.
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

The shortage of healthcare professionals is a challenge felt around the world. In Canada, and Saskatchewan, this challenge is particularly pronounced in rural and remote areas, where recruitment and retention has historically been difficult. To make sustainable progress, the Government of Saskatchewan is focused on recruiting, training, incentivizing, and retaining healthcare workers throughout the province, in all communities, to build a stronger health workforce. This emphasis has been directed at in-demand health professionals, such as family physicians and nurses, as well as all healthcare professionals across the spectrum, from specialist physicians to continuing care assistants, paramedics, laboratory technologists and others.

From literature review and direct engagement with healthcare professionals, we have identified key factors to help support recruitment, retention and integration of new healthcare practitioners into communities.

Working in healthcare teams, achieving a healthy work-life balance, feeling valued in their roles and integration of the family into the community emerge as recurring themes. While recognizing that healthcare delivery is a provincial responsibility, communities can play an active and valuable role in supporting the settlement, inclusion and retention of health professionals. We extend gratitude to Saskatchewan communities for the important work they do.

In recognition of the partnership between communities and the healthcare system we have developed this toolkit. It is a compilation of insights gathered from communities—highlighting what is working well, addressing common questions, and incorporating findings from relevant literature. This toolkit was developed with communities, for communities, as a resource to support retention and integration to help address the healthcare workforce challenges we collectively face.

This toolkit was created as a resource that provides guidance to communities looking to provide settlement support for healthcare practitioners. Over the last year, to create this document, we:

- Engaged with over 20 Communities,
- Met with SUMA and SARM, and engaged with their memberships in editorials,
- Presented at the SARM Midterm Convention,
- Spoke with healthcare providers,
- Heard from First Nation and Métis groups,
- Consulted with:
 - Saskatchewan Medical Association
 - Saskatchewan Health Authority



Photo credit: Tourism Saskatchewan

What Can Communities Do?

It is widely recognized that community involvement is key to healthcare practitioner integration in rural areas. Many communities have taken an active role in supporting the retention and inclusion of healthcare practitioners by establishing a close relationship with health employers to learn when new health practitioners are arriving in their area. As a result, they can then showcase their community as a great place to live, provide a warm welcome to healthcare providers and their families, and potentially offer support with housing, partner employment, and social and cultural connections. It is critical to provide a strong first impression of your community and a sense of welcoming to the new healthcare professional who is joining the local workforce. Getting in contact early and maintaining a friendly relationship will foster a foundation between the community and the healthcare provider.

Community Promotion

When a healthcare practitioner chooses Saskatchewan, they are coming not only to work in healthcare, but also to have a great life. There is no one better to showcase the community than the community members themselves.



“First impressions are incredibly important when welcoming a healthcare practitioner into the community. The initial perceptions that may influence judgment about the community can be shaped within the first interactions, and can set the tone of the relationship between the community and the practitioner on. Having a favourable first impression can lead to a stronger connection to the community and can increase the likelihood of the practitioner having a positive experience.”

– Don Hood,
Esterhazy Health Foundation



Creating a Website

Maintaining a professional website, where information is available to healthcare professionals, can be helpful when showcasing your community to new practitioners. A website can spotlight the services, education options, recreation opportunities, attractions, and social groups within the community. It could also note the healthcare facilities and types of health professionals that practice in the area.

A dedicated section on the website could focus specifically on healthcare practitioner retention and inclusion, with testimonials from local practitioners offering first hand insight into their experiences within the community. Outlining community efforts to support healthcare worker inclusion, such as available housing, incentives or committees that are in place, would also be useful. Having this information readily available can effectively communicate the appeal of both the professional and personal aspects of joining the community.

“Recruiting and retaining health-care professionals is a collaborative effort, and communities play a crucial role in creating a welcoming and supportive environment for new practitioners and their families. This toolkit, developed with input from Saskatchewan people, communities, and health professionals, is a valuable resource that will help strengthen our health-care system now and in the future. I extend my sincere gratitude to the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency for leading this initiative and engaging communities across the province to enhance our collective efforts in supporting health-care professionals.”

**Andrew Will, CEO,
Saskatchewan Health Authority**

A website might include the following:

- Links to local amenities, recreational activities, museums, parks, shopping, etc.
- Instructions on how to register children for school, links to education facilities or childcare options.
- Tourism sites.
- Testimonials of healthcare practitioners, their families, and other community members working and living in the area.
- Healthcare facility descriptions and Saskatchewan Health Authority information.
- Links to community social media channels.
- Employment assistance for partner/family members, including job boards, local employment offices, and additional careers supports.
- FAQ and Q&A forums.
- Government of Saskatchewan website links such as [Programs and Services to Help You Settle in Saskatchewan](#) webpage.

Creating a Community Welcome and Integration Committee

It's helpful to have a dedicated group of community members focused on healthcare practitioner retention and integration into the community. Leadership to support the committee is integral to the success of the group, and selecting leaders who will take hold of ideas, bring people together and deliver on priorities is crucial. Many communities throughout Saskatchewan already have an established committee to coordinate and share the work of supporting healthcare practitioners into their area. A community committee can play a critical role in welcoming the newcomer and their family by organizing events, offering personalized tours, as well as providing a local point of contact.

Communities are urged to establish their local committee in a manner that best suits their needs and dynamics. Creating a Terms of Reference (see example in Appendix A) can be helpful to organize the work and creating an agenda that keeps a record of meetings, dates, accountabilities, and responsible roles will be a source of information for future use. Following a checklist can also be helpful in confirming all tasks are completed and to ensure nothing gets overlooked (see example in Appendix B).

Organizing the city, town, village and rural municipalities that form the catchment area for the healthcare services in the region can be an inclusive way to ensure there is collaboration across the diverse communities. This will also help to strengthen fundraising efforts and pool community resources to effectively represent all residents who utilize the health services.

Drawing insights from discussions with other communities, the following membership recommendations can provide valuable guidance in structuring your committee:

- **Health Professionals:** Include physicians, nurses, and other healthcare practitioners who understand the unique needs and challenges of the profession in the community.
- **Community Leaders:** Engage local municipal officials, business leaders, and representatives from community organizations to ensure diverse perspectives and resources are considered.
- **Residents:** Involve community members who are passionate about healthcare and invested in the well-being of the community
- **Educators:** Collaborate with representatives from local educational institutions to foster partnerships and support initiatives related to healthcare training and education.



- **Local Business:** Partner with businesses to explore opportunities for employment and support for healthcare professionals and their families.
- **Community Navigator:** Consider creating a navigator position for a local expert who provides connection to the local community and its resources for the healthcare practitioner.
- **First Nation and Métis Communities:** Actively involve diverse populations, specifically First Nations and Métis communities to ensure that inclusive representation and perspectives are being considered.

By establishing a committee with representation from various sectors and interests within the community, you can harness collective wisdom and resources to enhance retention and inclusion efforts and create a welcoming environment for healthcare professionals and their family.

“Getting to know the healthcare professional prior to their arrival, but also after they begin employment is important so that I can tailor my support to their needs. I have found success with building relationships with the healthcare providers to assist them with soft settlement into the community of Leader where I have taken on the role of Community Navigator.”

– Pam Busby, Local Real Estate Agent and Community Navigator, Leader



Some communities have established a volunteer position for a Community Navigator and their role is to serve as the primary liaison between the community and healthcare practitioners.

They can be a first point of contact as questions arise from the practitioner and their family. The ideal candidate for this position is an individual with strong knowledge of the local area and its amenities, while being able to help connect the practitioner and their family to local people and services.

Activities that a Committee or Navigator can lead:

- **Orientation Tours:** Organize and conduct orientation tours for new practitioners and their families, showcasing key community amenities, such as schools, parks, recreational facilities, and cultural attractions.
- **Health Practitioner Appreciation Events:** Organize practitioner recognition events to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions and work of healthcare professionals in the community, where practitioners can meet local residents, business owners and local leaders, fostering connections and a sense of belonging.
- **Information Sessions:** Host information sessions to educate new practitioners about local healthcare services, support resources, and opportunities for professional and personal development within the community.
- **Cultural Immersion Activities:** Arrange cultural immersion activities, such as visits to local historical sites, participation in cultural festivals, or opportunities to engage with First Nation and Métis or other ethnic communities, to help new healthcare practitioners appreciate local diversity and heritage.

- **Social Gatherings:** Organize social gatherings, such as potluck dinners or neighborhood barbecues, to facilitate informal interactions and camaraderie among healthcare workers and community members. This could include contacting neighbouring communities to participate to broaden the healthcare workers' social network.
- **Mentorships Programs:** Develop mentorship programs pairing new practitioners with experienced practitioners or community members, to provide guidance, support, and insights into navigating personal aspects of life in the community.
- **Spousal and Family Support:** Offer support and resources for the spouses and families of new healthcare practitioners, including assistance with employment opportunities, childcare services, and integration into community activities.
- **Arranging Winter Driver Training and Transportation:** Given the unpredictable and sometimes harsh nature of winters in Saskatchewan, it can be beneficial to connect providers and their family with specialized training sessions to ensure individuals feel confident behind the wheel. Considering alternative transportation options for the practitioner and their family may also be necessary and help serve the families short-term needs.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Regularly check-in with the healthcare practitioner and their family to gather feedback and insights to inform the community on the supports that they are receiving, and apply the learnings to new arrivals.



“The engagement process on developing the Healthcare Practitioner Community Support Toolkit was collaborative and well-organized. Being part of the process was a rewarding experience. This toolkit will provide communities with practical strategies to create a welcoming and sustainable environment for healthcare practitioners. It will be a valuable tool that helps communities take an active role in strengthening local healthcare access.”

– Sheila Sim, Moose Mountain Healthcare Corporation

Funding

Many communities consulted for this toolkit have expressed that support and retention work provided to healthcare practitioners can require financial resources. Funds can be raised in a variety of methods, including charging a per capita levy, or collecting donations from local healthcare foundations, community groups, other fundraising activities and private donors. Communities will have different financial resources available to support this work and are encouraged to tailor their recruitment efforts to match their financial resources, ensuring a sustainable plan for settlement support. It is important when raising funds for healthcare practitioner support to consider having a responsible person assigned to oversee the financial matters. This may include setting up an appropriate bank account, preparing annual budgets, financial controls, and fulfilling other necessary duties.

Financial Incentives

Offering financial incentives is one tool to recruit new healthcare practitioners to communities, however evidence suggests that financial bonuses alone are not an effective strategy to sustain a healthy rural workforce. Providing incentives can be useful in the short-term, but may not be successful in long-term retention.

Caution should be taken when offering differing compensation incentives across Saskatchewan. Some communities who have the financial resources to supplement the incentives offered by the government run the risk of unethically attracting healthcare practitioners from other Saskatchewan communities that are also in need. It is important that competition between Saskatchewan communities is avoided and instead, working collaboratively to find the right match for each community is the priority.

If opting to provide financial incentives, it is important to consider if there is an expectation of a minimum term of employment. In some cases, the healthcare practitioner may not fulfill the agreement and it is important for both the community and practitioner to have a written agreement on terms for repayment. It is recommended that this agreement be drafted by legal counsel to ensure its enforceability and to mitigate any risk to the community.

Items to consider when drafting a Return of Service contract:

- Agreed upon length of time the provider will work in the community.
- When the work will start and end.
- Expectation of full time or part time work.
- The terms that the payment can be used for, i.e. vehicle, housing, childcare costs or general use.
- Financial repayment if length of time worked is not met and if the full incentive amount will be repaid, or if it would be prorated.
- How leaves of absence will be handled.



Photo credit: Tourism Saskatchewan

Providing financial incentives can put hardship on community members as generating funds to sustain the incentives can be challenging. In addition, if implementing new incentives to attract healthcare practitioners to the community, it may create hard feelings between existing health professionals who were not eligible for the financial compensation. Offering financial incentives should be done with careful thought as there can be several unintended consequences.

Here are examples of financial incentives used by some communities:

- Bursaries or scholarships for community members that are pursuing education in the health field, supporting a 'grow your own' approach.
- Signing bonus for new employees.
- Retention bonus for employees who have remained over a determined timeframe.
- Preceptor bursaries to provide an incentive for healthcare professionals to support student exposure to the community.

There are additional financial incentives that are offered by the Government of Saskatchewan, the Federal government, and other organizations and healthcare employers that are available to healthcare practitioners. Some of the incentives have been highlighted in Appendix C, however it is crucial to note they frequently change.

“Advocating for our community and fostering strong relationships within it is essential for growth and success. By building support with surrounding municipalities, we’ve been able to pool resources and enhance our efforts in supporting healthcare practitioner settlement. A collaborative approach is key, but it’s also important to have a face to the community—someone who can connect early on with newcomers and help guide them through the process of becoming part of our community.”

**Elden Jamieson,
Reeve of Maple Creek**



Understanding the Needs

It is important to tailor the work of the community to the specific needs of the healthcare practitioner. The tools and ideas provided in this toolkit can be applied to a healthcare practitioner and their family who may be experiencing Canada for the first time, or someone relocating from another province. Many of these tools and strategies can also be utilized for Saskatchewan residents who are moving into the community. Understanding the requirements of the individual and family helps to support the integration of the practitioner to the community. If the practitioner is joining the community with a family, paying attention to the needs and interests of the family is crucial in helping them successfully settle into their new home.

Housing Support

Access to housing in communities poses a common challenge for newly arriving healthcare workers seeking to settle. Many small urban areas, and rural and remote communities, lack a sufficient supply of rental homes, which is typically what is sought when joining a new community. Moreover, even if housing options are available, they may not be affordable or equipped with the necessary amenities for the practitioner and their family. Providing guidance or resources to help healthcare practitioners and their families find suitable housing within the community is immensely helpful. This could include information on local real estate agents, rental properties, or assistance with navigating the local housing market.

There are several communities across Saskatchewan who have recognized the need for available housing to support the soft settlement of healthcare providers in their community. One approach adopted by some is to purchase a home(s) for new healthcare workers to rent. The community will rent the home to the healthcare practitioner for market value, expecting common maintenance and utilities to also be the responsibility of the tenant.



School Enrollment Assistance

Offering support and information regarding local schools, including enrollment processes, school districts, and educational programs available for children of healthcare practitioners is beneficial. Assistance may also involve connecting families with school administrators or arranging school tours.

Daycare Facilities or Daycare Options

Assisting families in locating daycare or childcare services within the community is a noted need as well. This could include providing information on licensed daycare centers, home-based childcare providers, or community-based childcare programs. The Government of Saskatchewan has a list of [Regulated Childcare Facilities](#) that are available in communities. Childcare can be especially challenging for healthcare provider's schedules which often includes evening, weekend, overnight and holiday shifts.



Employment Opportunities for Spouse/Partner or Family

Supporting spouses or partners of healthcare practitioners in finding employment opportunities within the community can also be a major factor in successful recruitment and retention. This may involve sharing job listings, networking opportunities, or providing information on local businesses or industries.

Helpful links:

- [Government of Saskatchewan - Where to look for work](#)
- [SaskJobs](#)
- [Health Careers in Saskatchewan](#)
- [Government of Saskatchewan Careers](#)
- [Linkedin](#)
- Job search engine sites, e.g. [Indeed](#), [Workopolis](#)



Spiritual and Community Connections

Facilitating opportunities for healthcare practitioners and their families to engage with the local culture and community is important. This could include connecting families with cultural organizations or community groups, and providing resources for cultural supports. Similarly, connection with spiritual or religious organizations that they are interested in and local places of worship or spiritual support groups may be welcome. Included below are some helpful links to support new community members who may be from different cultural backgrounds.. These tools can also offer a connection for new community members to learn about or engage with others living in different regions in the province.

- [Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan](#)
- [Regina Immigrant Women](#)
- [International Women of Saskatoon](#)
- [Saskatoon Open Door Society](#)
- [Saskatchewan Intercultural Association](#)
- [Regional Newcomer Centres](#)

Recreation Activities

Recreational activities and amenities available within the community can be a very important recruitment and retention tool. Information could include highlighting local parks, sports facilities, recreational programs, outdoor activities, and community events. Additionally, providing recommendations or resources for exploring recreational opportunities in the surrounding area is beneficial.

"I am honoured to have the opportunity to collaborate with the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency. I was approached early in the development stage of the Agency in recognition of about fifteen years of the trials and tribulations of landing Physicians and other health care professionals in our community. The Agency visited my community to meet with me, visit the healthcare facilities and meet with some of the providers and administrators to get a feeling for the impact of community involvement in providing a "soft landing" for new arrivals. The Healthcare Practitioner Community Support Toolkit is a great resource for communities like ours that are dealing with providing support of healthcare professionals. My advice is to get to know new providers and give them a friendly contact to advise them on the challenges of becoming established in an unfamiliar environment.."

- Amund Otterson, Mayor of Shellbrook



Appreciation

Demonstrating appreciation for healthcare practitioners can foster a sense of value and belonging within communities, which in turn could encourage them to remain in their positions for a longer-term. When healthcare professionals feel acknowledged and valued for their contributions, they are more likely to develop a strong attachment to the community and feel motivated to continue serving its residents. Additionally, expressions of appreciation can enhance general morale, leading to greater job engagement and a deeper commitment to the community's healthcare needs. As a result, healthcare practitioners are more inclined to stay for longer terms, thereby contributing to the stability and sustainability of healthcare services in the province.

When considering appreciation for the practitioner and their family:

- Consider the healthcare practitioner preferences.
- Build on your partnerships with business and community organizations.
- Build on ideas that will engage the community.
- Establish a budget.
- Consider cultural sensitivities.

Here are a few creative ideas that have been utilized by others:

- Breakfast, coffee or lunch delivered to providers at work.
- Potluck gathering at a local home.
- Picnic for the health providers and community members.
- Engage local business to obtain discounts, small gifts or gift certificates.
- Free passes for local or area facilities (golf course, swimming pool, etc.).
- Mayor of the community to send welcome or thank you notes.
- Engage the children in the community to create welcome or thank you notes.
- Profile your health provider(s) in the local newspaper.
- Celebrate the health practitioners during their professional **recognition day/week**.



Diversity

Saskatchewan is made up of many different people who, over generations, have established many incredible communities. These communities have a history of strong values where diversity and acceptance are embraced, and where the residents cultivate a feeling of home and sense of pride. Healthcare practitioners who come to work in Saskatchewan are from many diverse cultural backgrounds and may be experiencing our province, and possibly even the country, for the first time. It can be challenging for newcomers to feel accepted or understood in their new communities.

Providing support to healthcare practitioners who are entering Canada for the first time, and acknowledging and accepting their differences will help to improve the retention of the healthcare practitioner. The Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan have published a **Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Toolkit** which has helpful information about approaches, tools for action, and stories to foster work in supporting multiculturalism.

“Ensuring a sustainable health-care workforce depends not only on strong recruitment efforts but also community connections and long-term retention initiatives.

Community leaders, local organizations, and Saskatchewan residents all have an essential role in helping new health-care professionals feel at home, both personally and professionally.

This living document provides communities with practical strategies to help support retention and recruitment, reinforcing our shared commitment to quality health-care for all Saskatchewan residents. We deeply appreciate the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency for its leadership in developing this vital resource.”

**Dr. Susan Shaw, Chief Medical Officer,
Saskatchewan Health Authority**



Photo credit: Tourism Saskatchewan

Meet the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency



+ ABOUT THE AGENCY

The Government of Saskatchewan established the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency that is dedicated to the recruitment and retention of health professionals from within Saskatchewan, across North America and overseas.

+ OUR MANDATE

Develop and implement strategies as well as tactics that facilitate the local, national and international recruitment, retention, transition (path to practice), and placement of health professionals in Saskatchewan, in collaboration and coordination with provincial and local stakeholders such as the Saskatchewan Health Authority, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, local health committees, and municipal leaders.

The Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency is committed to supporting employers and job seekers as well as participating in meaningful engagement with the community members and stakeholders.

Sourcing

Support employers by sourcing high priority health professions for Saskatchewan's healthcare system needs, including hard-to-fill vacancies and support hiring needs for service expansion.

- Promotion of career opportunities for the Saskatchewan health sector, including marketing campaigns, career fairs, webinars
- Coordination of international recruitment missions
- Collaboration with stakeholders including employers and community leaders

Support for Students and Job Seekers

Serving as a resource for health employers, students, job seekers, and international recruits for the promotion of healthcare careers and job opportunities in the province.

- Development and management of promotional information
- Navigation and coordination of settlement for domestic and international recruits

Engagement with Community and Partners

Analysis of key issues and opportunities, recruitment strategies, best practices, and innovative initiatives in sources and attracting to the health care sector.

+ CONTACT US

Phone: 306-933-5000 | Email: info@saskhealthrecruitment.ca



Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Terms of Reference/ Memorandum of Understanding

1. Definitions

In this agreement:

- a) "Affiliated Parties" means the municipalities, villages, towns or villages
- b) "Committee" means the collective members' representing the affiliated jurisdictions, and may include First Nations or any other recognized local membership.
- c) "Region" will refer to the Rural Municipality of X, the Town of X, the Village of X, the First Nation of X.

2. Term of the Agreement

- a) The initial term of this Agreement shall be from XX to XX unless otherwise specified in this Agreement. Thereafter the agreement may be renewed at the discretion of the Affiliated Parties.
- b) This Agreement may be amended by mutual consent of all Affiliated Parties unless specified otherwise in this Agreement
- c) It is agreed by the Affiliated Municipalities, the Committee shall meet at least once a year to review the terms and conditions of the agreement.

3. Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation

- a) The Affiliated Parties agree to create a recommending body known as the XX Healthcare Settlement and Support Committee.
- b) The Committee will meet on an "as required" basis and will develop recommendations for the support and retention of healthcare workers in the Region.
- c) The topics that will be discussed by the Committee include:
 - Determine areas of need and/or focus
 - Support strategies for healthcare practitioners
 - Incentive options for students or other individuals
 - Financial support for the Committee

4. Communications

- a) All committee members will be sent budgets, meeting minutes, communications and policy information.
- b) External communications sent out by or on behalf of Committee should be reviewed and approved by all Committee members. In the case Committee members are not available to review the communication in a timely manner then a back-up person can be appointment to review and approve the communication on behalf of the member.

5. Members of Committee

- a) The Committee will consist of XX individuals from XX municipalities, organizations, First Nation Communities.
- b) The Committee shall appoint a chairperson, a vice chairperson and a treasurer.
- c) The Committee will draft agendas, reports and recommendations to produce for public awareness, where appropriate
- d) The addition of members will be at the discretion of the Committee, and may determine the conditions and provisions for the addition of new members.

6. Powers of the Committee

- a) A majority of the members of the Committee constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business
- b) The committee may regulate its own procedure and business
- c) The Committee may establish procedures for the Affiliated Parties that allow for the holding of joint public meetings
- d) The Committee may appoint any consultants or employees that may be necessary for the exercise of any of its powers or the performance of any of its duties and fix their remuneration.
- e) The Committee may appoint advisory committees consisting of one or more of the members or any other person.

7. Duties of the Committee

- a) The Committee will conduct activities to ensure the ongoing support for healthcare practitioners and encourage retention for existing workers in the jurisdiction.
- b) The Committee may also:
 - i) Hold a public meeting and publish information for the purpose of obtaining the participation and cooperation of the residents of the region.
 - ii) Develop financial resources to fund the Committees activities
 - iii) Identify the social and economic implications of the committee's recommendations
- c) The Committee may pay for any remuneration and expenses of the person it appoints at a rate established by the committee or for costs associated with the workings of the committee at rates established by the committee and approved by the Affiliated Parties.
- d) The Chairman will make arrangements for an annual or interim financial statement to be prepared and made available to all Affiliated Parties.

8. Dispute Resolution

- a) In the event that a dispute over any issue related to or addressed under this agreement should occur between Affiliated Parties and First Nations:
 - i) The Committee will meet and attempt to resolve the dispute.
 - ii) In the event the Committee is unable to resolve an issue, the next step will be to seek the assistance of mediation.
 - iii) In the event a dispute cannot be resolved through Steps 1 and 2, the Committee will appoint an arbitrator whose decision shall be final and binding upon all signing parties. The Arbitration Act of Saskatchewan in force from time to time shall apply to arbitration proceedings commenced pursuant to this Agreement.

In witness whereof the parties have affixed their corporate seals as attested by the duly authorized signing officers of the parties as this XX day of XX, XX.

Signatories

Appendix B: Sample Checklist

Pre-Arrival

- Identify leading community members that will be first point of contacts for the new healthcare practitioner
- Begin communicating the practitioner and their family as soon as their contact is available to retain the important information about what will be important to them to settle into the new community and get an idea of any concerns or needs they may have.
- Have navigator or lead community member contact the healthcare practitioner to understand the needs of the individual and/or family.
- Develop a soft settlement plan, incorporating the needs of the practitioner and/or the family
- Provide resources such as websites for community amenities that may be of interest, such as schools, daycare, recreational activities, etc.

Arrival

- Provide welcome card/basket for the healthcare practitioner at their new home
- Have an in-person meeting with the healthcare practitioner to the support team or navigator to provide for introductions
- Determine where additional supports or outstanding needs may be required for the practitioner and their family
- Provide tour of the community to the healthcare practitioner and family
- If incentives are provided, ensure Return of Service contract is signed by all parties
- Create a news release in the local newspaper/website about the new healthcare practitioner joining the community

Post-Arrival

- Host a welcome BBQ or meet and greet for the healthcare practitioner and their family.
- Provide monthly check-ins with the healthcare worker, ensuring that they have the support required and to address any concerns
- Invite healthcare practitioner and family to community events and activities and facilitate connections to community members

Appendix C: Available Saskatchewan Incentives

This guide is not exhaustive and the available incentives frequently change.

Rural Physician Incentive Program: Offers up to \$200,000 over five years to family physician practicing or currently practicing in rural and remote communities.

SMA Family Medicine Bursary: The Saskatchewan Medical Association provides up to \$25,000 for up to three years for family residents who work in rural and remote communities.

Saskatchewan Rural and Remote Incentive: Offers up to \$50,000 to healthcare workers in high priority positions in rural and remote locations.

Student Loan Forgiveness: Offered to nurses and nurse practitioners in rural and remote communities which forgives up to \$30,000 of their Saskatchewan Student Loans.

Graduate Retention Program: The Government of Saskatchewan rebates up to \$20,000 of tuition fees paid by eligible graduates who live in Saskatchewan and who file a Saskatchewan income tax return.

Final Clinical Placement Bursary: Offered to students in an eligible health discipline that requires the completion of a final clinical placement as part of training.

Additional Resources and Further Reading

All Hands – A recruitment resource for physician recruitment in Nova Scotia – Nova Scotia Health [Community Recruitment Toolkit | Nova Scotia Health Authority \(nshealth.ca\)](#)

Canada's Health Workforce: Pathways Forward, An Assessment by the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences [Assessment on Health Human Resources – Canadian Academy of Health Sciences | Académie canadienne des sciences de la santé \(cahs-acss.ca\)](#)

Physician Recruitment Toolkit – Health Force Ontario, [Physician Recruitment for Communities \(healthforceontario.ca\)](#)

Promising practices to support retention of the healthcare workforce in northern, rural and remote communities in Canada - Health Excellence Canada, [Strengthening Primary Care in Northern, Rural and Remote Communities \(healthcareexcellence.ca\)](#)

Medical practice in rural Saskatchewan: factors in physician recruitment and retention - Kevin Wasko, Jaqueline Jenkins, Ryan Meili, [Medical practice in rural Saskatchewan: factors in physician recruitment and retention - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

Family Physician Recruitment and Retention Toolkit – Practice in BC, [Recruitment & Retention Toolkit | Recruitment and Retention \(practiceinbc.ca\)](#)

Rural Health Professionals Action Plan – Alberta Health [Attraction and Retention Program - Rural Health Professions Action Plan \(rhpap.ca\)](#)



**Saskatchewan
Healthcare
Recruitment Agency** 

The Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency is dedicated to the recruitment and retention of health professionals from within Saskatchewan, across North America and internationally. By collaborating with partners and stakeholders, we work to develop and implement innovative strategies to attract top talent and foster interest in careers in healthcare in Saskatchewan.

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