
Fort St. John Physician Recruitment Update - Spring 2014

May 5, 2014

This update is intended to provide you with the latest information on the Fort St. John physician recruitment efforts and the health care services available to support the residents of Fort St. John during this challenging time.

Physician Recruitment Efforts

- Northern Health, the North Peace Division of Family Practice, local physicians and physician specialists, the City of Fort St. John, and other community partners are working in collaboration with community partners to find and recruit physicians to the community.
 - This has been on-going for more than a year and we are utilizing all the tools at our disposal to reach out globally to attract physicians to the community.
 - The partners continue to meet to ensure we are exhausting every opportunity to attract physicians and to ensure we continue to work together.
- The main factors that physicians consider in the decisions to locate to a community vary, but the critical elements are:
 - The practice environment - what is it like to be a physician in a community.
 - The lifestyle - is the community a place I want to bring my family and remain a long time.
 - Financial considerations - what is the payment, the cost of living and the cost to practice.
- NH has launched a website for recruitment to the entire Northern Health region, but with an initial focus on Fort St John.
 - We are answering the questions the physicians generally ask, but through stories by the physicians themselves.
 - You can find the website at physicians.northernhealth.ca
- Fort St John is a teaching hospital, and we focus on both attracting experienced physicians who may want to get involved in teaching, but also to bring in students and residents in hopes that they may remain and practice after their educations and residency is complete.
- We will utilize locum coverage, physicians that practice in a community for a temporary amount of time, whenever possible to minimize the impact on the community in the short term.
 - Locum coverage is a temporary solution to some of the pressure but not a long term solution.
- There is no single strategy to physician recruitment, but working in collaboration has proven effective in [Fort St. James](#) and Mackenzie, and we feel we can be successful in Fort St John by working together on creative solutions.



Dear community member,

Re: Fort St. John Physician recruitment

We are writing to assure you that we understand and share your concerns about the current physician shortage in the community, and to inform you that we are working collaboratively on solutions to provide the medical services you need, when you need them.

For a variety of reasons, in the past 18 months a number of physicians have left their practice in Fort St. John. We have been working very hard to fill these positions. The demand around the world for doctors is very high and it is a very competitive process. Northern Health, the North Peace Division of Family Practice, the City of Fort St John, along with other local stakeholders, are working together to help recruit physicians and ensure health care services are available in the community.

Northern Health will be opening an unattached patient clinic in early July to provide on-going services to patients without a family physician. The patient clinic allows for people who do not have a family physician to receive timely access and follow up care. This clinic is being developed with the cooperation of the North Peace Division of Family Practice, the Fort St John Medical Clinic, the ABC Medical Clinic and all the physicians in the community. Until we can open the clinic, the Fort St John Medical Clinic has agreed to continue to see patients without a family doctor until the end of June. In addition, the walk-in clinic at the ABC Medical Clinic will continue to provide service.

The Prenatal Clinic is available to provide expecting mothers consistent care throughout their pregnancy and who may not have a family doctor. This is a partnership between Northern Health and the North Peace Division of Family Practice and residents can access the clinic by calling 250-261-7508.

In addition to the prenatal clinic and the new patient clinic, we are continuing to recruit aggressively around the world for permanent physicians to move to the community. NH has launched a website for recruitment to the entire Northern Health region, but with an initial focus on Fort St John. We are answering the questions the physicians generally ask, but through stories by the physicians themselves. You can find the website at physicians.northernhealth.ca.