



# Finding the Right Fit for Your Practice



**Powell River**  
Division of Family Practice  
A GPSC initiative

A RESOURCE FOR NEW & RECRUITING PHYSICIANS



This booklet is a resource for both the **new physician** looking to join a practice and the **recruiting physician** looking to find a new physician to join their practice.

Finding a new colleague or joining a medical practice is more than just filling a vacancy. It is important to consider the factors that set the stage for a long-lasting and fruitful partnership.

EXAMPLE

## Determining factors in a physician reaching a relocation decision (in order of importance):



1. Acceptability of location to spouse
2. Availability of adequate hospital facilities
3. Quality of educational system for children
4. Lifestyle found in the area
5. Availability of other physicians
6. Climate or geographic features of the area
7. Access to continuing education
8. Family and/or friendship ties to the area
9. Cultural advantages
10. Regular work hours
11. Availability of recreational and sports facilities
12. Income potential
13. Opportunities for social life
14. Prospect of being influential in the community
15. Population of the community

Source: Physician Sourcing and Search, Atlanta, GA

# Questions to Ask When Evaluating a Practice



## Personal/Lifestyle

- Will my family be happy living in this community? Consider housing, schools, childcare, recreation, arts and cultural opportunities, shopping and amenities.
- Are there employment opportunities for my partner?



## Practice Values

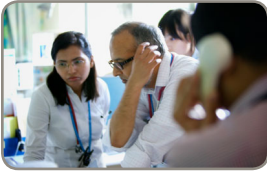
- What is the mission statement of the practice? Does this align with my values and how I hope to practice medicine?
- How does the practice fit into the larger community? What is its reputation?
- Has anyone previously left the practice? If so, what were the circumstances?
- Is there someone within the practice that can act as my mentor? How much peer support will I have?
- Do the physicians in the practice follow current guidelines and evidence-based medicine?
- Are existing group members open to change (practice style, remuneration)?
- Is there a management group in the practice? Will I have input in management decisions?
- Is there a process in the practice to bring forward criticism or address conflicts within the practice?
- Are there teaching opportunities or obligations?



Joining a practice is like a marriage: value differences can cause conflicts.

Have conversations with potential new colleagues to get a variety of perspectives on the culture of the practice.

## Practice Operations



Talk to support staff for a front lines perspective of the practice and administrative support available to you.

- What is the practice environment like? Is there a mix of patients, young, elderly, healthy, and complex care?
- How will I get patients referred to my practice?
- Can I select my own patients?
- What EMR does the practice use?
- Are the patient records up-to-date and indicate compliance with evidence-based practice guidelines for preventive care and screening?
- What are the regular office hours? Is there flexibility to determine my own hours?
- How are appointments scheduled at the practice (including procedures, counselling, periodic health examinations) and how much time is allotted? Can I customize my appointment schedule?
- How much administrative support will I have? What specifically does this include?
- What would my on-call obligations be? Is this shared equally and how is it organized?
- What are the arrangements within the group for holiday coverage, maternity leave, sick days? Am I still expected to pay overhead during this period?
- How are internal conflicts handled in the practice?
- Will I have my own office or do I have to share an office with others? Will I have to “float” to use offices that are available?

## Financial

- How much overhead am I expected to pay? How is this number determined and is it the same for each physician?
- What resources are provided to me as part of my contribution to overhead?
- Roughly how many patients will I have to see per week in order to cover my expenses?
- What incentives are available for physicians practicing in this community?
- What are the billing and collection practices of the practice? Are patient's charged for uninsured services? What happens if someone does not pay their bill?
- Will I have to pay an "overhead" percentage on income generated outside of the office practice?
- What is the financial solvency of the practice? Have they ever had difficulty meeting their financial obligations?



Consider locuming in the practice for a time before making a permanent commitment.

Ask to see the clinic's financial statements and if you do not understand them, review them with an accountant.



## Business



Have a lawyer who understands medical practices and an experienced physician review the contract before signing. They may be able to identify things that are not obvious in the wording.

- How is the practice set-up? As a group of associates or a partnership? How does an associate become a partner?
- Do the physicians own, lease or sub-let the office space? Is there future opportunity to buy-in?
- How is money spent in the practice? How are decisions made about spending money within the practice?
- What is the near-term and long-term vision for the practice?
- Do practice associates share in the development of this vision or is this solely decided by the practice owners/partners?
- Are there limitations in how I practice? The type of work I do or clients seen?
- Are there any limitations to where else I can practice now and in the future?
- What is the process for adding new physicians to the practice?
- What avenues are there for professional growth within the practice?
- Are there local opportunities for professional education?
- Is there a process for leaving the practice? What are the financial, contractual, legal and career ramifications if I decide to move on from this practice?
- What is the availability of medical specialists within the community?



## New Physicians

### Sources and Additional Reading

Canadian Medical Association , New in Practice Guide 2015  
<https://www.cma.ca/En/Pages/new-in-practice-guide-2015.aspx>

HealthForce Ontario Recruitment Essentials  
<http://www.healthforceontario.ca/UserFiles/file/Floating/Program/Recruiter%20U/recruitment-essentials-rr-en.pdf>

Rogers, Marcy T. 10 Tips for Considering Joining a Group Practice  
<http://www.spineuniverse.com/professional/practice-management/10-tips-considering-joining-group-practice>

Schechter, Karen S. What to ask before you join a medical practice. Amednews.com, Nov 19, 2007. <http://www.amednews.com/article/20071119/business/311199998/5/>

Walfish, S. & Barnett, J. (2008) Financial success in mental health practice. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Zimmerman, Jeff (2007) Joining A Practice: A Practical Guide, The Practice Institute.  
<http://thepracticeinstitute.com/running-a-practice/joining-a-practice/>

# Questions to Ask When Recruiting a Physician



## Personal/Lifestyle

Contact the Division of Family Practice for support arranging a site visit.

Ensure that the physician's partner is included in the site visit and that there are plans to accommodate his or her employment needs and interests as well.

Consider inviting a physician to locum in the clinic for a time in order to help both of you determine best fit.



- Why are you considering our community?
- What are your lifestyle needs – family, cultural, recreational and personal?
- What are you looking for in a community?

## Practice Values

- What do you hope your practice will look like in Powell River?
- What motivates you the most?
- Why are you leaving your existing practice (if applicable)?
- What does teamwork in your ideal medical practice look like?
- Describe some strategies you might use in order to resolve a conflict with staff/colleague?
- Would you like someone within the practice to act as your mentor? If so, please describe the role you hope the mentor could play.
- Tell me about a time when you persuaded team members to do things your way?
- Tell me about a time when you were tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours?
- Tell me about a time when you were faced with an ethical dilemma?
- Describe some strategies you might use in order to resolve a conflict with a combative patient or family member?

## Practice Operations

- What is your preferred practice profile? (For example: office/daytime clinic, ER shifts, OB, surgical assists, on-call, hospital privileges)
- How many patients would you like to see in an average day? How long would you like with each patient for a normal visit?
- What experience have you had using an EMR? A computer?
- What kind of schedule do you hope to have?
- What are your expectations in terms of administrative support?
- Do you have any concerns/issues with the call rotation?
- How much vacation time would you expect per year (on average)?
- Do you have any special clinical, research, administrative or other medical interests? Is there any committee work that you would like to be involved in?
- Would you like the opportunity to teach students and residents?



What kind of flexibility can you offer in terms of schedule, on-call obligations, vacation time, and coverage?



## Final Checklist

### Find out the following:

- Is the candidate licensed to practice medicine in this province? If not, begin the process.
- Has the candidate's license ever been revoked or has the candidate been denied a license?
- Has the candidate ever been convicted of a crime or been involved in medical fraud?
- Has the candidate ever been denied hospital privileges?
- Has the candidate ever lost the right to prescribe drugs of any kind?
- Has the candidate ever been sued for malpractice? If yes, how was it settled? Who was at fault?
- Who is the candidate's current malpractice carrier? Is the candidate insurable? Will the candidate need help paying their insurance?



Remember to investigate the candidate's

- license
- references
- education & training
- malpractice insurance

### Check the following:

- The College of Physicians and Surgeons (provincial & national).
- Education and postgraduate training information
- Postgraduate training information
- References (at least three; if one is unsatisfactory, do at least one more)
- Licensure/certification information

### Finalizing the hire:

- Provide a written contract outlining any verbal agreements
- Begin hospital admitting privileges application/review process
- Help arrange the move, as necessary

## Recruiting Physicians

### Sources and Additional Reading

Canadian Medical Association (2015), New in Practice Guide 2015,  
<https://www.cma.ca/En/Pages/new-in-practice-guide-2015.aspx>

Divisions of Family Practice, Recruitment and Retention Toolkit  
<https://www.divisionsbc.ca/provincial/recruitmentretention>

HealthForce Ontario Recruitment Essentials  
<http://www.healthforceontario.ca/UserFiles/file/Floating/Program/Recruiter%20U/recruitment-essentials-rr-en.pdf>

Hobson, Bruce (2012), Physician Recruitment

EXAMPLE

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