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The Canadian Sustainability Plan

Proposed Sustainability Plan for Nunavut Physician Recruitment and Retention

Based on the project undertaken in Nunavut, the NU Physician Recruitment and Retention Project Steering Committee has developed the following recommendations based on the elements of the Making it Work Framework for Workforce Stability.

The following table describes recommended activities in each framework area. This section is followed by considerations related to the key factors for success.

	Recommended Activities	Responsibility	Anticipated Resource Requirements
Plan	<p>Assessment of population services needs and service model</p> <p>Ensuring that the service model in place optimally addresses population service needs requires periodic assessment of population health indicators, and indicators of adequacy of services. Service delivery models that are aligned with indicators of service needs are also strongly linked to physician job satisfaction and retention. This has not been a focus of this project, however, it is recommended that a monitoring framework be established and that key indicators be reviewed on a five-year cycle.</p>	<p>Department of Health (collaborative initiative between population health division and Medical Affairs.</p>	<p>Potential analyst contract @ \$25,000 every 5 years.</p>
	<p>Review of profile of target recruit</p> <p>We recommend that every 5 years, a survey of long-standing local practitioners, as well as practitioners who have left be conducted, to revisit the profile of target recruits, and what factors are likely to retain / attract physicians who are the right fit for Nunavut.</p>	<p>Medical Affairs</p>	<p>No cost, free digital survey software can be used. Requires up to 5 days to develop, administer and analyse the surveys every 5 years.</p>

Recruit	<p>Information sharing</p> <p>To ensure potential recruits have on-going access to relevant information, we recommend budgeting for a recruitment website refresh every 5 years, with an evaluation of its content the previous year.</p> <p>We also recommend implementing a service standard of responding to inquiries within 2 business days and publishing this standard on the recruitment web site. This task must be part of a recruitment officers' job description and performance assessment.</p>	Medical Affairs	<p>Web design contract \$25,000 every 5 years.</p> <p>In addition, consider engaging in an on-going "as-and-when" contract for up to \$15,000 annually for regular updates and announcements added to the web site as needed.</p>
	<p>Supporting families / spouses</p> <p>The physician surveys conducted during this project indicated that physicians were very pleased with the support and information available to them during the recruitment process. Standardizing the approach to welcoming recruits' families and helping them become integrated in the community is essential, to ensure that this quality of service is on-going even when there is turn-over in the existing positions. Creating a standard approach and integrating it in Medical Affairs procedures and job descriptions is recommended.</p>	Recruitment Officer	<p>Consider creating standardized processes for supporting and helping spouses and families to integrate in the community. This may involve partnerships with Municipal and other partners. Integrate these in job descriptions of relevant staff.</p>

Recruit	<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>New approaches to community engagement have not been part of this project 2016-2019, however, considerable potential exists to strengthen ties with organizations in Nunavut, who can play a role in recruitment and retention, by supporting the integration of new recruits in the community. For example, the local municipal government or health services may agree to appoint a “buddy” to new recruits and their families to help them to become connected to services and programs that are available.</p>	<p>Medical Affairs</p>	<p>An annual luncheon with key recruitment partners (City of Iqaluit and other municipal partners) highlighting successes and collaborative needs for physician recruitment and retention can assist in sustaining positive collaborative relationships with community partners –consider budgeting \$5,000 / year for an event to recognize partners and plan for the next year’s collaboration.</p>
Retain and Train	<p>Relevant Professional Development</p> <p>The success and impact of the CEPD events held in Iqaluit over two years during this project suggest that an investment in annual CEPD events is worthwhile, both for supporting team cohesion, and ensuring that physicians have access to training on issues of relevance to Northern/remote practice. Engaging with a medical school to assist in the coordination and accreditation of these events can reduce the burden of coordination of these events on Nunavut-based physicians and staff.</p>	<p>Medical Affairs</p>	<p>Up to \$20,000 annually for coordination and accreditation of CEPD events, inclusive of fees for speakers, space rental, catering and other related costs.</p> <p>In addition, the cost of securing sufficient locums for clinical coverage during the event, and travel for out-of-town physicians must be considered (\$45,000).</p>

Retain and Train	<p>Supporting Team Cohesion</p> <p>Nunavut physicians already meet weekly to discuss issues of relevance to them. In our surveys, physicians also indicated they would like to have opportunities similar to “IQ days” which are offered to GN employees (land excursions and cultural activities, on paid time, coordinated by the employer). This provides an opportunity to support physician learning on local culture, and provides a positive way to enhance collegiality among the team outside of the work setting.</p> <p>One recommendation that emerged through this project was around involving existing medical staff in recruitment decisions. In other jurisdictions, long term physicians are not hired until they have completed a locum and the local team of physicians has debriefed and made an assessment related to the fit of the potential recruit to their team. Implementing this recommendation would not be costly, but would involve creating a standard process that includes these elements, and integrating it in the job descriptions of relevant recruitment personnel.</p>	<p>Medical Affairs / Chief of Staff</p>	<p>Consider budgeting for paying guides, rental of equipment for up to 20 physicians to participate in “IQ day” activities. The cost of locums to ensure clinical coverage must also be considered.</p>
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Retain and Train	<p>Training of future professionals</p> <p>Nunavut already has a strong practice of training medical students and residents. However, an opportunity exists to enhance Nunavut's position as a training centre of excellence. In other rural and remote jurisdictions, successful advocacy has taken place to "over-recruit" physicians beyond the level of clinical need, to ensure that physicians have protected time for training future professionals, rather than expecting them to find time for quality teaching and mentorship in an environment where clinicians are already stretched thin. This reduces burn-out among already-stretched physicians, and enhances the quality and recruitment power of the placements for students.</p>		<p>Investment of time / advocacy to secure executive leadership commitment and new financial resources.</p>
	<p>Nunavut Health Careers Camp</p> <p>During this project, a successful Nunavut Health Careers Camp has taken place, and a second pilot is planned for 2019. This provides an opportunity to develop potential future physicians from Nunavut. At this time, the project partners are seeking to secure a permanent source of funding and leadership for this project. Nunavut Arctic College and Makigiaqta, the Inuit training corporation, are discussing potential on-going roles. NU physicians went beyond the call of duty and generously offered their time to workshops in this camp. Consider continuing to support the Nunavut Health Careers Camp (encouraging physicians to participate, possibly on paid time) as part of the Division's efforts to preen future physicians for Nunavut.</p>		

Conditions for Success

	Considerations	Recommendations
Recognition of unique rural and remote issues in our region	With the seat of Government in Nunavut being located in Nunavut, health services are not struggling with leadership that does not recognize rural and remote issues. This condition for success is already in place.	N/A
Inclusion of Rural and Remote Perspectives “not about us without us”	Engaging with community members periodically to better understand their needs and expectations from their health services providers, and the challenges they face in accessing services is an important consideration.	In the cycle of recruitment and retention initiatives, consider periodic patient surveys, if only every five years, to learn right from your “clients” what is working for them and how you can improve patient services, the service delivery model, or modify who you are targeting with your recruitment efforts.
Leadership Commitment	Ensuring that leadership is aware of the underpinnings of your approach to recruitment and retention is essential, to ensure that operational and financial support will continue to be applied to your long-term vision of quality continuous care for Nunavummiut.	Consider creating a clear evidence-based recruitment and retention strategy, and present its underpinnings and outcome data to Departmental leadership periodically, to highlight the value of the investments that are not strictly operational, such as CEPD events or training of future professionals.
Annual Cycle of Activities	When there are many vacancies, our work is often driven by urgent needs, and our retention efforts can be set-aside. Building an annual cycle of initiatives related to recruitment AND retention into job descriptions and workplans can help to ensure that urgencies do not over-ride long-term plans.	Consider creating an annual cycle of activities (and a five-year cycle of investments) based on the recommendations from this project, and integrating it in operations and workplans, to ensure that a wholistic set of initiatives is consistently underway.
Adequate Investment	This sustainability plan includes some costs that may not already be budgeted for, and requires adequate human resources to administer.	Develop a budget for your recruitment and retention strategy and build it into 5-year projections. Items to consider include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20,000 per year for CEPD event (plus cost of locum coverage) • Annual funds for “IQ” activities • \$25,000 every 5 years for website refresh • Additional \$10-15,000 per year for “as and when” web site maintenance contract • \$25,000 every 5 years for service model review based on population needs • Advocacy for funds to increase the base complement of physicians by 15-20% to allow protected time for training of future physicians. • Up to \$5,000 annually for a community partners’ luncheon



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