

The ethics of international health personnel recruitment



A message from **John Mabbott**, Executive Director, Health Match BC.

The issue of ethical recruitment of health care personnel was first raised by South African president Nelson Mandela.

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Provincial Recruitment Committee expands work

Health Match BC's Provincial Recruitment Committee (PRC) brings together senior managers from all of the health authorities in our province to find collaborative recruitment solutions. It is rapidly expanding its work in several important areas.

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British Columbia Health Recruiter News



BC Health Recruiter News is a forum for engaging and supporting health recruiters in our province. It is published as a dynamic means of sharing news and information among health recruiters from all health authorities and other stakeholders in British Columbia.

We value your input. Please email us your comments or send us your story ideas.

While we will make every effort to publish your contributions, we reserve the right to decline stories or edit for content, clarity, and tone.

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Ministry of Health Services

Health Match BC celebrates a decade of service

In January 1999, the Ministry of Health established Health Match BC as a provincial service to recruit health professionals in regions of BC that were struggling to maintain staffing levels in local health facilities.

Ten years later, Health Match BC has filled over 1,500 physician, 650 nursing and 45 hospital pharmacist vacancies in British Columbia.



Read the full story...page 4

Changes to the Agreement on Internal Trade



The Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) was signed by the provinces, territories, and the federal government in 1994 to reduce barriers to the free movement of persons, goods, services, and investments in Canada. Changes are being made that will affect over 100 occupations, including many health care professions.

Find out more...page 6



Curiosity, hopes and dreams drew visitors to BC career fairs

Hundreds of people were drawn by curiosity, hopes, dreams and the prospect of secure jobs to the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) Health Career Fair, held March 9 for high school students and interested public in the Victoria and South Vancouver Island area.

What they found...page 7



COMMUNITIES IN ACTION



Gabriola Island residents rally to improve local health services

The 5,000 residents of Gabriola Island pride themselves on being independent and resourceful. In the last two years, they have rallied as a community to tackle two major health care challenges: a shortage of physicians and the need for on-island, after-hours emergency care.

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PHYSICIAN PROFILE

Dr. Tim Troughton and his wife Victoria are originally from Ireland. They spent 10 years working in London, UK before moving to BC with their three young children in 2004. They now call the Creston Valley home and are enjoying rural life in the Kootenays.



Change was worth it...page 10

OUR RECRUITERS ON THE ROAD

Health Match BC's recruitment team continues to build on its previous success. This year, information sessions have been held in Australia as well as across Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Upcoming physician recruitment events:

August 27 - 29, St. John's: Canadian Psychiatry Association - Annual Conference 2009

October 2 - 3, London, UK: British Medical Journal (BMJ) - National Career Fair

October 9 - 10, Birmingham, UK: British Medical Journal (BMJ) - West Midlands Career Fair

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The ethics of international health personnel recruitment



More than 10 years ago, the issue of ethical recruitment of health care personnel was first raised by South African president Nelson Mandela. Mandela charged the United Kingdom with poaching health care professionals from South Africa, weakening the South African health care system and subsidizing its own system in the process. The UK responded with its own voluntary efforts to meet Mandela's challenge.

In intervening years, the HIV/AIDS crisis dramatized the impact of international recruiting, triggering widespread debate among international health care organizations.

Draft code of practice

In August 2008, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a draft code of practice on international recruitment of health care personnel. Member state consultations are ongoing, with a final voluntary code of practice to be tabled at the World Health Assembly in May 2010.

Canada is a WHO member state and will be expected to comply with the code if it is approved. Health Canada's Advisory Committee on Health Delivery and Human Resources is collating responses to the draft code from all provincial governments.

The WHO code, which will constitute voluntary guidelines, has four basic goals:

- to establish an ethical framework for health care recruiting that balances the rights of health professionals to emigrate with the right of health employers (in both sending and receiving countries) to take the steps necessary to provide appropriate health care services;
- to regulate how, when, and where health care recruiting occurs;
- to establish clear expectations for the health care professional, in terms of long-term rights and protection, and the employer, in terms of qualifications and commitment;
- to evaluate and monitor performance to ensure overall objectives are achieved.

BC's response

Recruitment of internationally trained health care professionals is integral to the human resource strategies of Canadian health care providers, including BC. Regardless of targeted recruitment initiatives, significant numbers of health care professionals choose to immigrate to BC and it is important to minimize licensing barriers and facilitate workplace integration.

Over the past decade, Canada has reduced its proportion of internationally educated physicians, while the proportion of internationally educated nurses has remained constant. However, due to population growth and the demand for health services, the actual numbers of both have increased. BC has doubled the number of medical students at the University of British Columbia and dramatically increased education seats for nurses and other health professionals, yet it will continue to draw on international recruitment to fill vacancies throughout the province.

Complying with the WHO ethical recruitment code would serve the purpose of confirming BC's determination to adhere to the highest standards and acknowledge our global population health responsibilities, while leveling the field between provinces and other developed countries. At the same time, Canada must continue to strive for self-sufficiency by educating increasing numbers of health care professionals.

John Mabbott
Executive Director
Health Match BC

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Provincial Recruitment Committee expands work

Health Match BC's Provincial Recruitment Committee (PRC) brings together senior managers from all of the health authorities in our province to find collaborative recruitment solutions. It is rapidly expanding its work in several important areas.

Allied health recruitment incentives

Our health authority partners are developing innovative incentive projects to attract allied health professionals in short supply throughout the province. Health Match BC is administering a fund of \$200,000 provided by the Ministry of Health Services for pilot projects that will be approved by the end of June 2009.

Aboriginal health careers promotion

Aboriginal people face considerable health care issues compared to the population as a whole. Furthermore, they are under-represented in the health care workforce. The province is developing an Aboriginal Health Human Resources plan to increase the numbers of Aboriginal people entering into health careers. The plan is being developed jointly by the First Nations Health Council, BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport and Health Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health. Health Match BC and the health authorities have aligned our efforts with those plans.

International health professional recruitment

Health Match BC is co-chairing a new working group with the Ministry of Health Services and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (Provincial Nominee Program) to work with the health authorities to enhance their recruitment efforts outside of Canada.

Sharing information and resources

All PRC members are sharing their ideas and best practices. Recently, members have provided useful information on employee referral programs; Health Match BC is updating its community profiles for all to use; Vancouver Island Health Authority has provided access to an important marketing study; Health Match BC and the Provincial Health Service Authority have provided nurse assessment tools; and a committee has been launched to update our shared student-to-nurse campaign materials.

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Health Match BC celebrates a decade of service

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In January 1999, the Ministry of Health established Health Match BC as a provincial service "taking an expanded role in the recruitment/retention of all health professionals to regions of BC that have difficulty in recruitment and retention." The goal was to "offer one-stop shopping as you search for an opportunity, apply for the post, and plan your relocation." (Canadian Medical Association Journal, February 2000)

Ten years later, Health Match BC has filled over 1,500 physician, 650 nursing and 45 hospital pharmacist vacancies in British Columbia.

"The majority of physicians have established practices in rural communities," says John Mabbott, Executive Director of Health Match BC. "Our direct recruitment of registered nurses (RNs) was suspended in 2006, but we have continued to facilitate health authority RN recruitment, and will be participating in collaborative RN and Allied Health Professional recruitment initiatives."

Seeds for our success

"We've grown significantly. Initially there were just two of us, now there are 14 people on our team," notes Susan Hill, Senior Consultant, Physician Services, and the second person hired at Health Match BC. "The seeds for our success were planted long before our launch in 1999 with the government's rural recruitment initiative. We've gone from more than 50 vacancies then to over 300 opportunities for physicians on our website now."

Leslie Arnold, now President of BC Mental Health & Addiction Services, was the first Executive Director of Health Match BC. She was succeeded by Ethel Davis, who served in this role for seven years. John Mabbott was appointed as Executive Director in July 2008.



The Health Match BC team has grown to a staff of 14 dedicated professionals.

2008: our best year!

- Health Match BC filled 235 family practitioner and specialist physician vacancies in 2008, a 15% increase over the previous year. In addition, 46 applications from physicians for the Provincial Nominee Program were processed.
- 13 pharmacists were hired in 2008, bringing the total to 45 since Health Match BC expanded its portfolio to include hospital pharmacist recruitment in 2005.
- Health Match BC processed 170 applications from registered nurses for the Provincial Nominee Program in 2008 and continued to assist nurses through the Third Party Status Registration project with the College of Registered Nurses of BC.

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Health Match BC's local services and global initiatives

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"We're not just recruiting health professionals from across Canada and around the world," says John Mabbott, Executive Director of Health Match BC. "Increasingly, we're administering a variety of related value-added services."

These services and initiatives include:

Internationally educated professionals

- The BC Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) assists internationally educated health professionals in obtaining permanent resident status in an expedited manner. This program is administered by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development in collaboration with Health Match BC.
- Our Third Party Registered Nurse (RN) Advocacy service assists internationally educated nurses (IENs) with their registration with the College of Registered Nurses of BC (CRNBC). Health Match BC manages the process, supports candidates applying for CRNBC registration, and assists employers in getting the candidates ready to start work.
- An estimated 1,500 Canadians are studying medicine outside of Canada. Health Match BC keeps in touch with this potential pool of physicians for our province. We provide them with information about moving to BC, and assist them with establishing their careers in our province.

Committees and Joint Initiatives

- Health Match BC launched the Provincial Recruitment Committee which includes senior recruitment managers from the six health authorities and Providence Health Care. They meet regularly to share their expertise, collaborate and discuss matters related to the recruitment of nurses and allied health professionals.
- Family Physicians for BC (FPs4BC) is a joint initiative between the BC Medical Association and the provincial government, developed to support recent graduates to establish themselves in full service family practice in a designated community. Health Match BC is on the steering committee.
- Health Match BC is also on the steering committee of the annual UBC Residents Recruitment Fair, and assists in promoting it to the health authorities in BC. We also assist in recruiting residents to work in clinics across the province.

Workshops and Symposiums

- Health Match BC participates in the International Medical Graduate (IMG) Task Force and Orientation Conference held by the University of British Columbia's IMG Program. This program is funded by the provincial government to enable medical doctors who have trained in medical schools outside Canada to obtain residency positions that will lead to licensure for practice.
- Health Match BC sponsored and was a member of the organizing committee of the first Rural Health Workforce Symposium held May 31 to June 2 in Prince George. The Symposium is part of our ongoing efforts to improve rural health workforce skills and support. The committee also included the BC Academic Health Council, the Interprofessional Rural Program of BC, and the Rural Coordination Centre of BC.

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Ministry of Health Services

Changes to the Agreement on Internal Trade



What do the changes to the Labour Mobility chapter of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) mean for health recruiters in BC?

The AIT was signed by the provinces, territories, and the federal government in 1994 to reduce barriers to the free movement of persons, goods, services, and investments in Canada. Changes are being made that will affect over 100 occupations, including many health care professions.

Chapter 7 (Labour Mobility) addresses the elimination or reduction of labour mobility barriers. The intent is to enable any worker who is licensed, certified, or registered by a regulatory authority to be granted access to employment opportunities in their occupation in other provinces with mutual recognition of their qualifications. While the provincial premiers intended the new mobility chapter to be in place by April 1, 2009, three provinces have not yet ratified it. Once they do, it will be in force across Canada. The final ratifications are expected this summer.

The Chapter 7 amendments are in general terms:

1. elimination of provincial residency requirements as a condition for employment or certification
2. individuals certified by a regulatory body in one province must be able to gain certification in the same profession in any other province upon application to the responsible regulatory body, without a need to complete any additional training, experience, examinations, or assessments as part of the certification process.

The amendments reflect a movement towards a pan-Canadian consensus on many professional competencies.

What occupations are covered under AIT's Chapter 7 provisions?

The provisions apply only to occupations for which provincial certification is available or required, based on an assessment that certifies the worker is qualified. Regarding health care, the provisions apply currently to occupations such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists, but not medical laboratory technologists, medical radiation technologists. If and when BC decides to regulate these occupations the province would have to do so in a manner "conducive to labour mobility" so as not to create new labour mobility barriers. The Chapter also requires provinces and territories to notify each other of proposed changes to provincial certification standards and give other provinces the opportunity to comment.

Do the amendments to Chapter 7 mean that licensing requirements will be identical across Canada?

No, not necessarily. Regulatory authorities can still impose additional certification requirements on qualified workers from other provinces if they're needed to meet a "legitimate objective." A legitimate objective may pertain to areas such as public security, safety and order, or the provision of adequate services to all regions within its jurisdiction. Additional requirements can include but are not limited to examinations, additional education/training, or practice hours.

However, any additional requirements must relate to demonstrated differences in occupational standards or scopes of practice between the provinces. For example, a regulatory authority can still require a qualified worker to show local knowledge (e.g. jurisprudence), and English/French proficiency if not already demonstrated.

I'm looking at the websites for the different regulatory bodies in BC and I haven't really noticed any changes in the licensing processes post-April 1st. Why is that?

Provincial regulatory bodies for most health care professions such as registered nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists, had already agreed or substantially agreed to mutually recognize qualified workers from other provinces prior to April 1st.

Please note: This article is an overview of the AIT amendments. While every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the information, it does not constitute legal advice.

Summary: The implications of the amendments to Chapter 7 will become more apparent when implementation is complete across Canada.

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Curiosity, hopes and dreams drew visitors to BC career fairs

Related story:

Inclusion Works '09... page 8



A bored banker was thinking about being a lab technician while high school students couldn't wait to put on "scrubs" and get started on their health careers.

All were among hundreds of people drawn by curiosity, hopes, dreams and the prospect of secure jobs to the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) Health Career Fair, held March 9 for high school students and interested public in the Victoria and South Vancouver Island area.

Huge success

"We're ecstatic, it was a huge success for us, in spite of an unseasonal snowstorm that day," says Rod O'Connell, VIHA's Director, Recruitment and Retention. "We organized buses from local high schools and were expecting mostly students, but it turned out we had an amazing response from the general public, largely because of the media attention we got as a result of the current economic downturn."

The fair got a huge boost from Victoria area media coverage because the health sector offers well-paying, secure jobs. While many places are laying off staff, VIHA is hiring in a variety of roles, from nurses and physicians to clerks, lab technicians, and orderlies.

During the fair, there was a buzz of activity at VIHA's human resources booth and the department noted a significant increase in unsolicited general applications. High school counselors reported that many of their students were switching course selections based on what they learned at the career fair.

Students in scrubs

Many booth hosts were creative in making the career fair appealing to the hands-on generation. Brandon Barsanti, VIHA cyto-technologist, posted a sign above his 'lab technician' booth inviting attendees to "Dress up as an autopsy technician – take a photo." A lineup of people jumped at the chance to don gowns; gloves and face mask; peer through the microscope and pass around anatomical samples.

"This is cool, I feel like I'm in an episode of Scrubs," says Kate Smith, grade 11 student from Francis Kelsey Secondary School in Mill Bay who was helping tie a gown for her friend Danielle Gronnestad, now in grade 12 and already decided on a medical career.

Cheryl Stephens is a mid-career accountant. She came along because, she says: "I was bored with banking and ready to try something different. Working in a lab has always appealed to me...this could be the time to do it."

In human resources terms, VIHA has been holding its own, but it faces the prospect of its workforce depleted by the retirement of baby boomers and growing health care demands from an aging population.

The health career fair is one of VIHA's proactive strategies to respond to current and future recruitment needs. Following evaluation of the March Fair, VIHA will consider similar events in Nanaimo and Campbell River.

VIHA's Health Career Fair

- 1,400 attendees, of which about 600 were students
- 45 booths covered a broad range of health care careers and support jobs
- Educational institutions booths included the University of Victoria, Camosun College, Sprott-Shaw Community College, Academy of Learning, Insignia College of Health and Business, and the Greater Victoria School District Continuing Education.
- 15 schools bused students to the event.
- Last year, VIHA hired 2,436 new people, lost 1,520 through retirement and attrition for a net gain of 916 health care professionals.
- At any given time, there are approximately 400-500 job opportunities on the VIHA website (www.viha.ca)
- After the Fair, VIHA HR received more than 300 hits to their webpage "Exploring Healthcare Careers" and about 90 applications for employment.

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Inclusion Works '09

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Pamela Adamchuk (left), a consultant with Health Match BC, joins David Lindley, Interior Health's Aboriginal Human Resource Consultant, and Tamara Gregg (right), Recruitment Assistant with Northern Health, in providing career advice to a student at the Inclusion Works '09.

Aboriginal youth.

Health Match BC hosted a booth at Inclusion Works '09 representing all of the health authorities and facilitated the attendance of representatives from:

- Northern Health Authority (Tamara Gregg, Recruitment Assistant)
- Interior Health Authority (David Lindley, Aboriginal Human Resource Consultant)
- Fraser Health Authority (Karen Muller, Recruitment Consultant)
- Vancouver Coastal Health (Zena Merali, Recruitment Advisor)
- Providence Health Care (Alice Garry and Michelle Conry, Recruitment Advisors).

Education materials provided by the First Nations Health Council were distributed at the booth in addition to information on employment opportunities in BC's health care sector.

"Aboriginal health career promotion is a priority for all health authorities in BC. We're committed to playing a major role in Aboriginal recruitment and working closely with other stakeholders in the province," says John Mabbott, Executive Director of Health Match BC.

Over 600 delegates attended the conference including speakers, employers, educators, and career counselors. Sponsors made it possible for the AHRC to bring in 100 job-ready Aboriginal graduates who were treated to three days of informative workshop sessions, a recruitment fair, a trade show and a networking reception topped off by a spectacular gala evening.

Dignitaries from First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities, along with government and corporate representatives, brought inspiration and energy to the event as well as representation from every part of Canada.

The conference was a huge success for all participants bringing Aboriginal inclusion into the national spotlight and laying the ground work for *Inclusion Works '10* to be held in Toronto, April 27 to 29, 2010.

Health Match BC was a proud participant in Inclusion Works '09 held in Vancouver from April 6 to 8, 2009. Increasing awareness of health careers among aboriginal youth is one of the strategies the province's Aboriginal Health Human Resources plan has identified to increase the number of Aboriginal peoples entering into health careers.

This first-ever gathering of HR practitioners and Aboriginal post-secondary graduates was hosted by the Aboriginal Human Resource Council (AHRC) with the goal of bridging the Aboriginal employment gap and effecting real change for

"Meegwetch to the whole team of trail breakers at the Aboriginal Human Resource Council for dreaming big." Participant, Inclusion Works '09

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Communities in Action: Gabriola Island



Dr. Daile Hoffman (left) and Dr. Francois Bosman open the Gabriola Community Clinic in 2007.

The 5,000 residents of Gabriola Island pride themselves on being independent and resourceful. In the last two years, they have rallied as a community to tackle two major health care challenges: a shortage of physicians and the need for on-island, after-hours emergency care.

Until a few years ago, emergency medical care was provided by the hospital in Nanaimo, a 20-minute ferry ride across the Strait of Georgia. When the overnight ferry callout emergency service was cancelled, residents sprang into action. In November 2006, they formed the Gabriola Health Care Society (GHCS) in response to the need for improved emergency and on-call, after-hours care on the island.

Hard work pays off

"By July 2007, our Society had raised enough money to develop and complete an interim facility which includes an equipped trauma care room," says Fay Weller, GHCS President. "We're now committed to raising funds for a new state-of-the-art, environmentally-friendly, community-owned and run facility."

"We wanted to create a fully-equipped, community facility so that family physicians wanting to practice here wouldn't have to go to all the trouble of setting up or starting from scratch," explains Judith Graham, a volunteer who leads the physician recruitment campaign on behalf of the Society.

"The Society's a great example of what a community can do. We're proud to support their efforts in every way that we can as we all work together – the Society, the Vancouver Island Health Authority, and Health Match BC - to recruit a physician to the island," says Brenda Warren, Leader, Physician Recruitment, for the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

Government help

A turning point for the community was when the GHCS organized an all-day Community Health Care workshop on last summer. Judith Graham facilitated a session on physician recruitment and retention: "As a result of the many comments and questions raised in that session, we realized that there were many things which we could do to highlight Gabriola as a preferred choice for family physicians."

After several GHCS board members met with Health Services Minister George Abbott, Gabriola was subsequently included in the Family Physicians for BC program (FPs4BC) which grants new physicians up to \$100,000 to work in rural areas. "In response to the FPs4BC program, we have a brand new doctor, Tracey Thorne, who will begin practicing here in July 2009. Sheila Leversidge from the Health Authority was most helpful in guiding us through the paperwork," says Graham.

Building momentum

Volunteers then looked into what other communities were doing, reviewed job postings and surveys, and researched recruiting strategies. "The vacancy for a family physician for Gabriola was on the Health Match BC website and we also sent copies of our brochure designed for family physicians," explains Graham.

GHCS Board member Dr. Don Butt wrote the text and designed the 'Family Physician Opportunity' brochure. "Our local doctors then put out the word to all of their contacts," says Graham.

"When one of our doctors left the island, we learned all about locums," she adds. "Members of the community generously offered their homes at no charge to the locums. We did our best to make all of them welcome."

"Having learned much about the incredible competition for family practice physicians in small communities, and recognizing that doctors will come and doctors will go, we are fully aware that we need to maintain a strong presence," concludes Graham. "We are not just building another building – we are building an environment – and it has to be irresistible to physicians."

*"We wanted to create a fully-equipped, community facility so that family physicians wanting to practice here wouldn't have to go to all the trouble of setting up or starting from scratch."
- Judith Graham, GHCS volunteer.*

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Ministry of Health Services

Physician Profile

Dr. Tim Troughton and his wife Victoria are originally from Ireland. They spent 10 years working in London, UK before moving to BC with their three young children in 2004. They now call the Creston Valley home and are enjoying rural life in the Kootenays.



"I think the biggest change in relocating to rural BC was the traffic – or lack of it. In London, I commuted for 50 minutes in heavy traffic to travel six miles to the clinic. It was extremely stressful. After working long days in a demanding clinic environment and spending 10 hours a week in the car, there was little time left to enjoy family, friends or hobbies.

We knew we wanted a change, and looked at many options. Once we started looking at BC, doors started opening all over, and it felt like the right thing. Working with Health Match BC helped to streamline the process of arriving in BC and getting settled here. There was a lot of paperwork to be done, both in preparing to leave the UK and in coming to Canada. Our experience with Health Match BC was a very positive one.

We chose Creston because it was the best fit with my skills and the clinic seemed to have a positive working environment. The local contacts we met were very welcoming and were a huge help when it came time to buy a house and a car and move our family over.

Another big change was leaving a salaried position for BC's fee-for-service structure. It's a very positive change, in that it provides an incentive to work, but it takes time and experience to learn how the system works. The emergency call schedule can be gruelling as well, and I find that difficult at times. It can also be challenging to practise front-line medicine in a rural area, without specialists on site. You have to be ready for anything that comes through the door.

But, even with the demanding call schedule, life is so much less stressful here. The small town is wonderful for kids and we felt welcomed and embraced by the community. People smile and are friendly, and even that was a big change. I have time for hobbies now, and I like to fly-fish in the summer and play badminton in the winter. And we love to go on family ski trips. My kids are already much better skiers than I will ever be."

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