

The challenges of international recruitment



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

We have no choice but to venture beyond our borders to recruit health care professionals.

Full report... page 2

New provincial committee tackles critical recruitment issues

Senior recruitment managers from the six health authorities, Providence Health Care, and the Executive Director of Health Match BC are meeting regularly to share their expertise and to collaborate.

The scope of the discussions includes all matters related to the recruitment of nurses and allied health professionals. **More info... page 3**

British Columbia Health Recruiter News



BC Health Recruiter News is a forum for engaging and supporting health recruiters in our province. It is published quarterly 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 (<http://www.gov.bc.ca/health/>)

Ashcroft residents welcome new physician



Residents of Ashcroft welcomed the arrival of Dr. Anwar Khan on November 17, 2008 to their underserved community. A local committee, Interior Health, and Health Match BC are working hard to recruit more physicians. **Read more... page 4**

Registration assistance for IENs

You've found a great internationally educated nurse (IEN) to fill your registered nurse vacancy and have made them an offer. Unfortunately, they don't meet all of the registration requirements of the College of Registered Nurses of BC.

Health Match BC can help.

Find out how...page 5



Over 30% of Health Match BC recruits were fee-for-service locums

Health Match BC filled 235 physicians vacancies last year, 78 of which were fee-for-service locum positions. Over half of the locums were international medical graduates and the majority went to rural communities.

And more great news... 11% subsequently accepted permanent positions in BC while 10% went on to complete another locum. **Read the full story...page 7**



COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

The Heart of the Matter: Rural Health Symposium
March 26, 27, and 28, 2009 in Clearwater

Join leaders from communities in the Interior at a three-day symposium dedicated to recruiting and retaining health professionals as well as sustaining health services in rural areas across the province.

Latest news... page 11

PHYSICIAN PROFILE



Dr. Isabelle Hughan moved from London, England to Sechelt with her scientist husband, Craig, and their infant son, Fraser, in June 2008. **Her story... page 12**

OUR RECRUITERS ON THE ROAD

Last year, Health Match BC's team of five experienced recruiters participated in 22 events attended by more than 100,000 health care professionals in Vancouver, across Canada, in the United States, Ireland and the UK.

In 2009, our recruiters will be meeting with health care professionals at key conferences, including:

February 26, Montreal: Outside Quebec Career Day

April 6 - 8, Vancouver: Aboriginal Human Resource Council - Inclusion Works 2009 (<http://www.aboriginalhr.ca/en/inclusion09>)

April 16 - 18, Halifax: The 17th Annual Rural and Remote Medical Conference (<http://www.srpc.ca/RR2009/index.html>), Society of Rural Physicians of Canada

April 23 - 25, Philadelphia: Annual Scientific Meeting (http://www.acponline.org/meetings/internal_medicine/2009/), American College of Physicians/American Society of Internal Medicine

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Executive Director's report

The challenges of international recruitment



Welcome to the inaugural edition of the *BC Health Recruiter News*. Our goal in publishing this newsletter is to highlight the impressive work being done by everyone involved in recruiting the world's best health professionals to BC.

According to the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) "staffing shortages" is one of the most critical issues facing health care providers nationally. A multi-faceted approach is required to sustain our health services as it is clear that the domestic supply of qualified health professionals will not be sufficient to meet demand for the foreseeable future.

We have no choice but to venture beyond our borders to recruit health care professionals. However, the international recruitment of physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals poses significant challenges, namely:

1. Qualifications

Due to differences in education, postgraduate or resident training, practice standards, regulatory environments, and health care systems, the qualifications of health professionals differ substantially from one country to another. Despite the public pressure to urgently fill the vacancies, we must ensure that patient safety remains the top priority when assessing a candidate's qualifications.

Patient safety remains the top priority when assessing a candidate's qualifications.

2. Competition

Our shortage of health care professionals is not unique to BC. As a result, all provinces and all developed nations have substantially broadened their recruitment efforts. Although spectacular, our province's natural wonders are not enough to attract a steady supply of qualified health professionals. We must also provide appropriate incentives such as competitive compensation, inter-professional teams, world-class facilities, safe working environments, and ongoing learning opportunities.

3. Ethics

As a global citizen, BC contributes to meeting international population health challenges as well as promoting basic human rights. Our international recruitment activities should underscore the right for individuals to migrate as well as support for countries struggling to sustain and expand their health care services.

4. Immigration

A fair and efficient way to fast-track health professionals for permanent residency is currently a work-in-progress. A thorough orientation to our health care system must be established as a part of the hiring process to ensure that newcomers can quickly and effectively start to work.

BC Health Recruiter News will be published quarterly highlighting the latest developments in these and many other areas of concern. We welcome your editorial contributions. I hope you will join us in making this newsletter a "must read" publication for all health care stakeholders in our province.

John Mabbott
Executive Director
Health Match BC

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News

New provincial committee tackles critical recruitment issues

Senior recruitment managers from the six health authorities, Providence Health Care, and the Executive Director of Health Match BC are meeting regularly to share their expertise and to collaborate.

The scope of the discussions includes all matters related to the recruitment of nurses and allied health professionals.

Some topics discussed to date include:

- recruitment incentives
- international nurse recruitment
- criminal records review
- student-to-nurse campaign
- ethical recruitment
- Aboriginal health career promotion
- marketing and communications

Members of the Provincial Recruitment Committee (PRC) are:

Health Match BC - John Mabbott (*Alternate*: Marilyn States)
Fraser Health Authority - Darleen Odegard (*Alternate*: Glenn Marcus)
Interior Health Authority - Gail Brown (*Alternate*: David Bamford)
Northern Health Authority - Marie Nygaard
Provincial Health Service Authority - Judy Clark (*Alternate*: Linda Hand)
Providence Health Care - Anne Schretlen (*Alternate*: Eileen Evens)
Vancouver Coastal Health Authority - Nicole Jantzi (*Alternate*: Debbie Blaney)
Vancouver Island Health Authority - Rod O'Connell (*Alternate*: Carol Fuller)

The next Provincial Recruitment Committee meeting is scheduled for February 19 at the Health Employers Association of BC office.

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News

Ashcroft residents welcome new physician



Mayor Andy Anderson of Ashcroft and Mayor John Ranta of Cache Creek welcome Dr. Anwar Khan.

Residents of Ashcroft welcomed the arrival of Dr. Anwar Khan on November 17, 2008, less than three months after their two previous physicians announced their resignations. Another physician had left the community in November 2007.

"The recruitment of Dr. Khan marks a first and significant step as work continues to attract additional physicians to Ashcroft," notes Maryann Simpson, Manager of Health Services for Ashcroft, Clinton and Logan Lake at Interior Health. "Recruitment efforts continue in partnership with Health Match BC, the

local recruitment committee, and the involvement of Dr. Khan."

As soon as Health Match BC was notified of the vacancies, the experienced team of physician recruiters used all of their resources to help fill the positions.

"Last year, we referred 14 family physicians and one family physician/anesthesiologist to Ashcroft, including Dr. Khan. He learned about our service from a friend of his who we successfully placed in another rural community in BC," says Margaret Kennedy, a Senior Consultant, Physician Services, with Health Match BC.

Another doctor has accepted a position in Ashcroft and is expected to move there later this year. Seven candidates subsequently accepted positions in other BC communities last year, while the other physicians continue to explore their options.

Residents of Ashcroft and nearby Cache Creek contributed over \$3,000 to the local doctor recruitment committee, and provided an apartment to assist new physicians in moving to the community.

Community Snapshot: Ashcroft

- The village is home to 1,790 people
- Ashcroft and District General Hospital provides long-term care with 16 extended care beds, 4 emergency beds, and 1 respite bed. The hospital is equipped with X-ray facilities and a lab.
- Homemakers and home nursing round out the provision of medical services.
- Ashcroft also has a dental clinic, denture clinic and optometrist.
- The provincial ambulance service operates from Ashcroft and covers the area which also includes Cache Creek.

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News

Registration assistance for IENs

Related story:

Health Match BC's third-party process for IENs... page 6

You've found a great internationally educated nurse (IEN) to fill your registered nurse vacancy and have made them an offer. Unfortunately, they don't meet all of the registration requirements of the College of Registered Nurses of BC (CRNBC). To work as a registered nurse in BC, IENs must have at least a temporary registration status with the CRNBC.



It's a situation that's likely to become more common as the number of IENs applying for positions in BC continues to increase. Last year, the CRNBC received 1,210 applications from IENs, up from 841 in 2007.

This growing demand is why Health Match BC launched a unique third-party service last year to assist IENs with their CRNBC registration.

An easier way

In 2007, representatives from all of the health authorities created a Third-Party Working Group to find a means of making the CRNBC registration process as easy as possible for IENs so that employers have their vacancies filled as soon as possible.

The result was a Third-Party Agreement which supports candidates applying for CRNBC registration and assists employers in getting the candidates ready to start work. Health Match BC accepted the responsibility of managing the process and subsequently launched the pilot project in December 2007.

To date, only 10 candidates have been referred to Health Match BC: two have moved to BC and are working as RNs; one is working here in a different capacity while waiting for temporary registration; another is waiting for a work permit; and six are in progress.

Contact Health Match BC today to find out how our experienced team can make the process easier for you and your candidates.

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Health Match BC's third-party process for IENs

Main story: Registration assistance for IENs... page 5

Who can use this service?

Any health authority can use this service when a letter of intent or a job-offer letter has been issued to a candidate, but they don't yet qualify for registration with the College of Registered Nurses of BC (CRNBC). At this time, the candidate can be referred to Health Match BC (HMBC).

Our unique service will facilitate the registration of your candidates, making the process as quick and easy as possible. The candidates are under no obligation – they can opt out of this service at anytime by giving notice in writing.

How does it work?

There are two consent forms:

- The "Health Match BC Third-Party Authorization to Release Nurse Applicant Information Form" is to be completed by the internationally educated nurse (IEN). It authorizes the CRNBC to provide registration information to HMBC so that it can act as a third-party intermediary between the candidate and the CRNBC. Health Match BC will communicate on the candidate's behalf during the processing of the registration application.
- The "Authorization for Health Match BC to Release Registration Application Information to Authorized Employers" form is also to be completed by the IEN. It authorizes HMBC to release any information from the CRNBC to employers.

All you have to do is provide copies of these forms to your IEN candidates, then ensure they complete and sign the forms before returning them to you.

Copies of the signed forms must then be sent to Health Match BC and the CRNBC. HMBC will then make sure that you are provided with regular progress reports on the status of the candidate's application.

How long does it take?

The amount of time that it takes to complete the third-party process varies from one candidate to another. We know that it can be stressful for the IENs when registration is in limbo. We also know that employers need their vacancies filled as soon as possible. That's why we are committed to making this process as fast – and as easy - as possible.

The third-party agreement ends when the candidate is eligible to write the registration examination. They will be notified by the CRNBC.

For more information on this unique service or for copies of the forms, please email recruit@healthmatchbc.org and enter "Third-Party – RN" into the subject line, or call 604.736.5920 and ask to speak with someone on our staff about the IEN third-party process.

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Over 30% of Health Match BC recruits in 2008 were fee-for-service locums

Related stories:

Employers: Need help finding locums?... page 8

New benefits for short-term locums... page 9

Ministry increases compensation for short-term rural locums... page 10



Dr. Granger Avery, JSC Co-Chair (left), and Minister of Health Services George Abbott announce changes to short-term rural locum compensation.

Last year, Health Match BC (HMBC) filled 235 physician vacancies - 67% of which were permanent positions and 33% were locum positions.

"Many people are surprised to learn that we also recruit locums, a service that is critical for health authorities which need locums to ensure continuity of care to patients in their regions," says John Mabbott, HMBC's Executive Director.

Short and long-term programs

There are two types of locum programs: per diem payments for short-term positions (administered by the Ministry of Health Services), and fee-for-service for long-term locums (arranged by Health Match BC).

The short-term program provides subsidized periods of leave for rural physicians so they can go on vacation or participate in education courses. Per diem compensation is provided by the Rural General Practitioner Locum Program (RGPLP) which is administered by the Ministry for the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues. (For more information, click on the link above *New benefits for short-term locums*)

Health Match BC arranges fee-for-service locums for family physicians and specialists where the length of the locum is greater than the 42 days covered by the RGPLP.

"Our program is designed to provide physician coverage while we're recruiting for their position, or to ensure care in cases where a GP is unable to work for an extended period of time," explains Mabbott. "Usually we arrange locums for up to one year for out-of-province physicians while we search for candidates for permanent placement."

Great opportunities for physicians

"Locum positions are an excellent opportunity for physicians to move to BC to 'try out' a community and explore their career options without making a permanent commitment. It's a great investment for our province, as several go on to accept permanent positions in BC," adds Mabbott.

Currently there are 44 locum vacancies registered on the Health Match BC website, the majority of which are in rural areas.

Locums recruited by Health Match BC in 2008

- the majority went to rural communities, primarily in Interior Health (37 locums), Northern Health (13), and Vancouver Island Health (14).
- half were international medical graduates
- 11% moved to permanent positions after completing a locum
- 10% completed more than one locum

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Employers: Need help finding locums?

Main story: Over 30% of Health Match BC recruits were fee-for-service locums... page 7

Click here to find out how easy it is to register your locum vacancy with Health Match BC. Or email recruit@healthmatchbc.org for more information.

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New benefits for short-term locums

Main story: Over 30% of Health Match BC recruits were fee-for-service locums... page 7

Effective Oct. 1, 2008, the Rural General Practitioner Locum Program ([http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pcb/pdf/Frequently_Asked_Questions_\(FAQ\)_Rural_Program_Changes.pdf](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pcb/pdf/Frequently_Asked_Questions_(FAQ)_Rural_Program_Changes.pdf)) (RGPLP):

- compensates physicians providing general practitioner locum services at rates ranging from \$750 - \$900, depending on the degree of isolation of the host community;
- pays locums between \$50 and \$100 on top of the daily rate if they provide specific, core services needed by the rural hospital and provided by the host physician. These include: general surgery, anesthesia, emergency medicine and obstetrics;
- provides rural physicians with up to 43 days of locum support, depending on the level of isolation of the community where they practise;
- increased the rate paid to specialists providing locum services to 18 rural communities will increase to \$1,200 per day; and
- raised the potential number of days of locum relief for specialists in rural communities will increase to 35 days to recognize the time spent in professional development activities.

To be eligible for the RGPLP, physicians must work in a community with seven or fewer physicians.

For eligibility in the Rural Specialist Locum Program, physicians must work in specified communities with fewer than five specialists working in the areas of general surgery, anesthesia, internal medicine, orthopedics, pediatrics and obstetrics.

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Ministry increases compensation for short-term rural locums

Main story: Over 30% of Health Match BC recruits were fee-for-service locums... page 7

Last October, BC's Rural General Practitioner Locum Program increased the compensation depending on the degree of isolation of the community and on the additional skills that the physicians provide to the local hospitals. Revisions to BC's Rural Specialist Locum Program are in the works.

These programs are designed to help BC licensed physicians working in eligible rural communities to secure subsidized periods of leave from their practices for vacation or continuing medical education. They are implemented by the province in collaboration with the BC Medical Association through the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues (JSC).

Reducing challenges for rural GPs

"The Rural Locum Program provides a great opportunity for doctors to experience working and living in different areas of the province," said Dr. Granger Avery, JSC Co-Chair and a rural GP, in a media release on September 19, 2008. "But more importantly, it reduces the challenges that rural doctors face when looking for locum replacements when time off from their practice is needed."

The new guidelines recognize differences in degrees of isolation of rural communities within four categories. This eliminates the flat rate currently provided to all physicians for locum service and the standard number of days offered for potential locum relief. The enhancements will strengthen medical coverage for BC's more isolated and vulnerable communities.

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COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

Join leaders from communities within the Interior Health region at a three-day symposium in Clearwater entitled *The Heart of the Matter* (<http://www.hugadoctorinclearwater.com/symposium.htm>).

Taking place from March 26 to 28, 2009, this conference will focus on the challenges and the solutions regarding the recruitment and retention of physicians and other health professionals to rural communities in BC. The symposium is being organized by the District of Clearwater in partnership with local leaders and other agencies such as Interior Health.

"The objectives are to bring information forward and create a forum where discussions can take place, experiences can be shared, partnerships and ideas can be explored, and the knowledge gained can be used to move forward in a positive way," says Bernadine Easson, Manager of Health Services for Clearwater, Barriere, and Blue River.

Speakers are being confirmed for what will be a dynamic and engaging three days. For more information, please email admin@districtofclearwater.com.

Health Match BC staff will be participating in the symposium.

The Heart of the Matter: Rural health symposium in Clearwater on March 26, 27, and 28, 2009

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PHYSICIAN PROFILE



Dr. Isabelle Hughan "Born in England, I went to school and did my medical training in London. Two years ago, my husband and I were looking to leave London when he spotted a Health Match BC ad. I had never been to British Columbia, but had enjoyed Seattle, so we attended a Health Match BC meeting in London. They explained the requirements and since then have facilitated our move with ease.

We chose Sechelt because it's the best of both worlds. You can easily get to Vancouver or Whistler, but it's still rural. We have fallen in love with the Sunshine Coast - stunning scenery, a gorgeous summer, winter skiing and friendly people.

We are much better off. I am being paid more than in the UK with rent and petrol at substantially lower prices. We enjoy a good meal and the food is fantastic here, mostly fresh and organic produce. Some things are more expensive - such as car insurance.

Being a physician here isn't that dissimilar to England - there are still waiting lists for outpatient appointments and MRI scans. I enjoy being self-employed (*Editor's note:* in our public fee-for-service system), although I still work within a practice with support around me. I also work in the local ER which gives great variety.

We have yet to have any regrets. It is hard to leave family and friends, but easy to fly here. If you are looking for a much better quality of life we couldn't recommend it more."