



# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

<b>SOP Title:</b>	Physician Recruitment	
<b>Applies To:</b>	All physicians and Nova Scotia Health team members involved in physician recruitment	
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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to establish a uniform process for recruiting physicians to practice within Nova Scotia.

Physician recruitment involves monitoring vacancies throughout the province through physician resource management processes (see [NSHA AD-MS-001 MD Replacement](#)), and filling those vacancies through recruitment processes. This is a collaborative process between Nova Scotia Health Medical Affairs, Primary Health Care, Department of Family Practice, Department Heads, Medical Zone Directors, and the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness.

This document includes the processes for physician recruitment for replacement positions for family and specialist physicians.

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## DEFINITIONS

<b>Applicant Tracking System (ATS)</b>	Software application that enables the electronic handling of recruitment needs.
<b>Candidate</b>	Qualified physician seeking employment with Nova Scotia Health
<b>Cold Lead</b>	Those who fall outside the Hot Lead category
<b>Operational Leader</b>	For the purposes of this policy Operational Leader includes, but is not limited to; program director/manager, Health Services Director/Manager, Team Lead, or coordinator associated with a program of care or department.
<b>Department Head</b>	For the purposes of this policy Department Head includes but is not limited to; Division Head, Chief, or identified formal physician lead.
<b>Hot Lead</b>	A Candidate who meets licensure eligibility by way of Canadian training or who appears to have an alternate pathway for licensure eligibility through the College's Acceptable Alternatives to the LMCC policy/or accepted jurisdictions for specialists. Hot Leads are also identified by vacancy needs.
<b>NSHA Turn-Key</b>	In a Turn-Key governance arrangement, Nova Scotia Health is responsible for the managerial and operational oversight of the collaborative family practice team and works collaboratively, with elements of co-leadership, with the family physicians who are part of the team.
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## PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Nova Scotia Health values and promotes collaboration between all parties involved in physician recruitment.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility (See Procedures Section)
Candidate	8, 14.1, 22, 23, 25 (if applicable), 28.1

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia	9.1.1, 10.2, 10.2.1, 10.2.2, 10.3.1
Community Stakeholders	15.1.2, 15.1.8, 15.1.10, 16.3
Departing Physician	4.1.1, 4.1.2, 6.1.2, 6.2.2
Department of Health and Wellness Representative	20.4, 20.5, 24.1
Department Head	All procedures relevant to role
Operational Leader	All procedures relevant to role
Hiring Department/Clinic	All procedures relevant to role
Physician Recruitment Consultant	All procedures relevant to role
Physician Resource Officer	3, 3.1, 26.2
Primary Health Care Coordinator	All procedures relevant to role
Zone Network Lead	All procedures relevant to role

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

1. Departing physician gives notice
  - 1.1. Physician informs Department Head of departure (see [NSHA AD-MS-001 MD Replacement](#) for details on this process).
2. Receive Practice Information Form
  - 2.1. Department Head submits completed [Practice Information Form](#) (PIF) to Physician Recruitment Consultant (see [NSHA AD-MS-001 MD Replacement](#) for details on this form's completion).
3. Receive response from Replacement MD Committee
  - 3.1. Physician Resource Officer communicates the outcome of Replacement MD Committee meeting (see [NSHA AD-MS-001 MD Replacement](#) for details on the Committee meeting).
  - 3.2. Physician Recruitment Consultant uses the application details along with PIF to move to active recruitment for this role if the vacancy for the Physician has been approved to be filled.

**Note:** Academic Funding Program Positions are supported by own department recruitment. Communication of vacancies and positions filled is required with Nova Scotia Health Physician Recruitment team for resource management.

**Note:** It is not necessary to wait for this step to be completed before steps 5 and 6. These processes can happen concurrently if necessary.

#### 4. Gather detail

##### 4.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant:

4.1.1. Contacts departing Physician's Department/Clinic (where applicable) and Department Head to gather more details about the practice.

- This includes clearly identified deliverables for the practice, as well as where there is room for compromise on those deliverables (e.g., nursing home visits instead of ER coverage).

4.1.2. Visits or communicates with Department/Clinic (where applicable) to learn the layout, meet the other providers and staff, and discuss the Department/Clinic offerings (e.g., procedure room, number of offices, exam rooms, etc.). The details gathered at this stage are used to prepare the posting.

**Note:** This visit helps the Physician Recruitment Consultant to fully represent the vacancy to potential Candidates and identify Department/Clinic matches based on Candidates' interests.

4.1.3. Works with Department Head to determine the areas of flexibility to be included in the posting (e.g., physicians who may want to teach, other services such as Emergency Department, percentage of FTE).

#### 5. Refer to existing Candidate pipeline for potential match

##### 5.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant:

5.1.1. Explores potential matches within sources of existing Candidates, which can include past job fairs, Candidate inquiries, recruitment / networking events with residents, past responses to job advertisements, and referrals.

5.1.2. Contacts potential matches and discusses the opportunity. If any Candidates are interested in the opportunity, refer to Procedure 8 (Candidates respond) to proceed with active Candidate process.

#### 6. Review practice opportunity posting

##### 6.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant:

6.1.1. Drafts opportunity posting based on information gathered to date.

6.1.2. Communicates with departing Physician where appropriate and Department Head to review posting, to help identify any practice changes and receive input.

##### 6.2. Department Head:

6.2.1. Must approve the final draft posting in Applicant Tracking System (ATS) in order for Physician Recruitment Consultant to post.

6.2.2. And Departing Physician (where appropriate) may refer Candidates, who will be screened as appropriate and added to the active Candidate pool.

#### 7. Begin active recruitment

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- 7.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant posts the practice opportunity on Nova Scotia Health [More than Medicine](#) site.
- 7.2. Physician Recruitment Consultant may:
  - 7.2.1. Promote the opportunity at current and upcoming recruitment events, such as medical conference or job fairs.
  - 7.2.2. Communicate the opportunity directly with residents who are completing their program in cases where program completion timing aligns with the timing of the opportunity.
8. Candidates respond
  - 8.1. Potential Candidates may request more information about the role. Physician Recruitment Consultant and Assistant respond to all inquiries and refer to Department Head where appropriate.
  - 8.2. Candidates apply via an online portal that feeds into an Applicant Tracking System (ATS), or through other methods such as referral, direct email, or job fairs.
  - 8.3. Candidates must provide a minimum of a curriculum vitae (CV) and list of references with their application. Candidates applying online are also given opportunity to check off specific interests (e.g., interest in teaching) to determine fit.
  - 8.4. Physician Recruitment Consultant and Assistant track all applications, including attaching application to opportunity posting, and attaching all communications with the applicant throughout the recruitment process.
9. Screen applications
  - 9.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant:
    - 9.1.1. Screens all Candidates, beginning with initial assessment for licensure to practice in Nova Scotia.
    - 9.1.2. Also considers other criteria such as additional skills, certificates, and interests.
    - 9.1.3. Contacts all Candidates to thank them for their interest in the opportunity and in practising in Nova Scotia, and provides them with information on the next steps based on their eligibility for licensure (see Procedure 10: Determine eligibility for licensure).
10. Determine eligibility for licensure
  - 10.1. Eligibility criteria met
    - 10.1.1. Candidates who meet basic eligibility criteria (i.e., Canadian trained, existing medical license in Canada, completing training in Canadian program) move into active Candidate status (Procedure 11: Vet active Candidates).
  - 10.2. Eligibility criteria potentially met

- 10.2.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant directs all Candidates whose eligibility is in question to contact the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia (CPSNS) to confirm their eligibility for licensure to practise medicine in Nova Scotia.

**Note:** Examples of Candidates whose eligibility may be unclear include international medical graduates (IMGs), or physicians not currently in practice.

- 10.2.2. Physician Recruitment Consultant may not need to wait for CPSNS response for Candidates who are Canadian-trained and licensed in another province, or who fall under the College's [Acceptable Alternatives to the LMCC policy](#)/or [accepted jurisdictions for specialists](#).

- 10.2.3. Physician Recruitment Consultant:

- Triages Candidates based on Hot Lead or Cold Lead status
- Determines next steps and level of engagement according to the Candidate's response to the request for confirmation of licensure

- 10.2.4. Once eligibility for licensure is confirmed, Candidates move into active Candidate status (Procedure 12: Present active Candidate).

### 10.3. Eligibility criteria not met

- 10.3.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant directs all Candidates who appear not to meet the eligibility criteria to contact CPSNS should they wish to follow through in determining their eligibility for licensure.

- 10.3.2. Physician Recruitment Consultant guides these Candidates to any potential pathways to licensure should they wish to learn more.

## 11. Vet active Candidates

- 11.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant contacts Candidate(s) to discuss details of the opportunity and provides overview (including potential personal and professional interests of the Candidate and timelines for beginning practice).

- 11.2. Department Head is responsible to review the expectations and deliverables of the role, and the Candidate's expectations and interests (more focus on professional interests and timelines).

- 11.3. Physician Recruitment Consultant in collaboration with Department Head determines whether Candidate is a fit for the opportunity based on information gathered to date.

- 11.4. Department Head makes the final decision on the Candidate.

- 11.4.1. If Candidate is a fit for the opportunity

- Physician Recruitment Consultant provides more information to increase Candidate's interest, such as incentive programs, lifestyle interests, or other aspects of the role such as working with learners.

- In consultation with the Department Head, the Physician Recruitment Consultant may offer a site visit to the Candidate at this stage. The Physician Recruitment Consultant communicates the appropriate next steps.

#### 11.4.2. If Candidate is not a fit for the opportunity

- If appropriate, Physician Recruitment Consultant may identify other suitable practice opportunities based on Candidate's interests. All Physician Recruitment Consultants work together to ensure they are all aware of Candidates who have interests suited to zones across Nova Scotia. Candidates are informed of any suitable practice opportunities available to them.

### 12. Present active Candidate

**Note:** The following steps may have been completed via vetting active Candidates; if not, proceed with 12.1 and 12.2.

- 12.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant presents the CV, reference list, and basic information about the potential Candidate(s) to Department Head to identify mutual interest.
- 12.2. Department Head has a discussion with Candidate if desired.
  - 12.2.1. If Candidate is a fit, Department Head instructs Physician Recruitment Consultant to proceed with Candidate.
  - 12.2.2. If Department Head decides not to proceed with Candidate, Physician Recruitment Consultant informs Candidate of other practice opportunities available, and return to Candidate pool for this opportunity.

### 13. Offer site visit

- 13.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant invites Candidate for a site visit as per [site visit guidelines](#) if it has not been offered at a previous point in the process.
- 13.2. A follow up [online feedback survey](#) is offered after each Candidate visit.

### 14. Accept site visit invitation

- 14.1. Candidate accepts invitation.
- 14.2. Arrangements can be made via virtual platform if Candidate is not available for site visit due to extenuating circumstances, but every effort is made to have Candidate visit in person.
- 14.3. Physician Recruitment Consultant presents site visit documents to Candidate, including Statement of Expenses and [Site Visit Guidelines](#).

### 15. Coordinate site visit

- 15.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant:
  - 15.1.1. Identifies the Department/Clinics that will be visited.

- If the visit is limited to one zone, 5-6 Clinics at most should be selected. If the visit will include more than one zone, 2-3 Clinics per zone at most should be selected.
  - The site visit will last 2-3 days per zone.
- 15.1.2. Works collaboratively with Physician Recruitment team to determine the most appropriate Department/Clinics and communities to visit based on Candidate interests and current opportunities. Candidate can also inform Physician Recruitment Consultant they will be visiting a specific Department/Clinic or community.
  - 15.1.3. Establishes logistics for the site visit
  - 15.1.4. Selects dates for the site visit in consultation with Candidate and identified Department/Clinics.
  - 15.1.5. Creates the itinerary.
  - 15.1.6. Works with identified Department/Clinics to plan the agenda for the visit.
  - 15.1.7. Provides Candidate with a Site Visit Checklist to determine what they may want to see during the visit and uses this information in the planning process.
  - 15.1.8. Shares this information with physicians, Department Head and community members who are assisting with the site visit.
  - 15.1.9. May provide additional information or introduce Candidate to relevant stakeholders if it is not possible to fit in all Candidate's interests.
  - 15.1.10. Determines relevant parties to include in the visit, e.g., community representatives, school representatives, potential employers/employment services, real estate representatives, Nova Scotia Office of Immigration representatives, other Nova Scotia Health team members, etc.
16. Carry out site visit
- 16.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant introduces Candidate to relevant Nova Scotia Health representatives such as Department Head or Nova Scotia Health team members who have a role in onboarding, pending their availability during the visit.
    - Candidate's availability takes priority in planning the schedule.
  - 16.2. Staff/physicians give Department/Clinic tours, and may include members of Department Family Practice or other staff of Department.
    - 16.2.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant may be present for entire visit and provides additional assistance if necessary, probes for information relevant to the Candidate, and keeps the agenda on track.
  - 16.3. A community member familiar with the area and services relevant to the Candidate delivers community tours, where possible. This could include Physician Recruitment Consultant, Department Family Practice/Primary Health members, physicians or staff, an identified suitable community member, or other stakeholders.



- 16.4. Physician Recruitment Consultant ensures Candidate signs consent to check references.
  - 16.5. Physician Recruitment Consultant informs Candidate of compensation model based on guidance from Department Head.
  - 16.6. Repeat this process for each site/community included in the site visit.
17. Debrief Candidate
- 17.1. The Physician Recruitment team sends a [feedback survey](#) to the Candidate following the site visit. The survey results are reviewed by Physician Recruitment Leadership on a monthly basis and reported back to the Physician Recruitment team members.
  - 17.2. Physician Recruitment Consultant also debriefs Candidate immediately following the site visit, in person if possible, or shortly following visit via phone or internet. This debrief can include discussion of any topics not covered during the site visit, response to Candidate's questions, and should address any issues and get Candidate's feedback and impressions.
  - 17.3. Physician Recruitment Consultant communicates any applicable next steps to Candidate.
18. Debrief Department/Clinics visited and Department Heads
- 18.1. Physician Recruitment Team sends feedback survey to those individuals involved in the site visit to gather information
  - 18.2. PRC contacts Department Head to gather feedback and determine potential offers.
  - 18.3. Department Head determines decision to move forward. The decision must be made within one week of visit, and offers presented within two weeks.
  - 18.4. Department Head conducts verbal and/or written references.
19. Decide if moving forward
- 19.1. Department Head, in consultation with Department/Clinic, decides whether or not to move forward with Candidate, and communicates the decision to Physician Recruitment Consultant.
  - 19.2. If yes, Department Head obtains verbal and/or written references for Candidate. Move to Procedure 20: Prepare offer.
  - 19.3. If no, return to active recruitment phase in Procedure 11.6.
    - 19.3.1. Department Head contacts Candidate to give reason for not moving forward.
20. Prepare offer
- 20.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant, in consultation with Department Head (DH) and Department/Clinic, gathers details for formal offer. Specifics of the offer are determined based on Candidate's interest and Department/Clinic's offerings. The start date is sometimes determined during the site visit and included in offer,

otherwise an arbitrary start date is included that will later be negotiated with Candidate.

20.2. Where deliverables are required, Department Head must review and revise.

20.3. If deliverables document is required, DH completes document.

20.4. DH sends offer and deliverables to DHW for approval.

20.5. DHW reviews offer and provides approval to DH.

## 21. Extend offer

21.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant extends offer to Candidate. The offer includes a letter clearly outlining the role, expectations, deliverables, and a timeline to accept or decline the offer (typically two weeks) as well as model of remuneration.

21.2. Physician Recruitment Consultant offers Candidate the opportunity for further discussion if desired.

## 22. Candidate decision

22.1. Candidate accepts or declines the offer.

22.2. Department Head contacts Candidate to ask the reason of decline.

22.3. If Candidate accepts, move to Procedure 23: Candidate accepts.

22.4. If Candidate declines, Physician Recruitment Consultant talks to Candidate to determine reasons, and shares information with Department Head and Department/Clinic.

22.5. If possible, Physician Recruitment Consultant amends offer in response to Candidate's reasons for declining, or presents other suitable opportunities for practice.

22.6. If Candidate still declines specific offer, return to active recruitment phase in Procedure 7.

## 23. Candidate accepts

23.1. Candidate signs offer letter, indicating agreement to expectations and deliverables, and returns letter to Physician Recruitment Consultant and Department Head.

## 24. Incentives

24.1. If necessary, Physician Recruitment Consultant connects Candidate with Department of Health and Wellness to pursue available incentives. Physician Recruitment Consultant offers any applicable [Nova Scotia Health incentives](#).

## 25. Immigration

25.1. If necessary, Physician Recruitment Consultant connects Candidate with [Nova Scotia Office of Immigration](#) for physician entry process.

## 26. Confirm hiring

26.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant confirms Candidate's acceptance with Department Head

- 26.2. Physician Recruitment Consultant shares this information with Physician Resource Officer.
27. Notify stakeholders
  - 27.1. Department Head notifies the Department/Clinic of the accepted offer and discusses logistics such as expected start date and Department/Clinic preparations.
  - 27.2. Health Services Manager/Health Services Lead may be included in stakeholder discussions depending on the Department/Clinic (e.g., Nova Scotia Health-supported collaborative practice team).
  - 27.3. If appropriate, Department Head may contact departing Physician to discuss the transition plan, including patient files, practice slow down, practice closure, etc.
28. Confirm start date and plan on boarding
  - 28.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant confirms the expected start date with Candidate, and works with relevant stakeholders such as DFP coordinator or Zone Medical Executive Assistant to communicate relevant next steps (see [Physician Orientation and Onboarding](#))
29. Address issues
  - 29.1. Physician Recruitment Consultant directs any issues identified during follow up procedures to Department Head.
  - 29.2. Department Head addresses issues as required.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

### Procedures

[NSHA AD-MS-001 MD Replacement](#)

[NSHA AD-MS-015 Physician Onboarding](#)

### Websites

[MD Replacement Form](#)

[Physician Departure Form](#)

[Practice Information Form](#)

[Physician Recruitment Feedback Survey](#)

[Physician Orientation and Onboarding](#)

[Nova Scotia Health Physician Incentives](#)

[Site Visit Guidelines](#)

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## VERSION HISTORY

Version:	Effective:	Approved by:	What's changed:
Original	2021-01-22	Director, Physician Recruitment	N/A