

WORKING TO BRING MORE DOCTORS TO NORTHERN ONTARIO

Northern Physician Resources Task Force

Update to Summit North Participants

Background

Summit North, an event that brought together over 125 stakeholders from across Northern Ontario in January 2018, initiated an important conversation about how we recruit and retain physicians to meet the needs of the communities across Northern Ontario, in particular family physicians in rural communities. Summit North generated ideas on how to build a flourishing physician workforce. Following Summit North, a task force was established to advance the recommendations from that event.

Northern Physician Resources Task Force (NPRTF)

NPRTF is a multi-sectoral collaboration that has overseen the development the Northern Physician Resources Action Plan based on *Summit North* recommendations and the nationally endorsed *Rural Road Map for Action*. Membership, based on the “Partnership Pentagram” includes communities/municipalities, health professionals, academic institutions, policy makers and health administrators.

Progress to Date

Key Themes of the Action Plan (see appendix on page 2) included:

- Ensuring healthy and resilient physicians and teams
- Creating welcoming communities
- Training and supporting skilled, competent rural generalist physicians
- Developing local and Regional Support Networks
- Improving supportive Infrastructure

For additional information on the Action Plan, please visit our [website](#).

Next Steps

The work in the appendix on the second page represents some of the initial steps taken over the past several months since finalizing the action plan in the summer of 2018. The Task Force has recently revised its [terms of reference](#) to allow a continued focus on implementation and monitoring of Summit North recommendations, ensuring alignment with emerging government direction and evolving health policy. The task force will continue its communications through stakeholders so that as many groups and individuals as possible are aware of the work being undertaken. Planning will begin shortly for Summit North 2.0 to be held in 2020.

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For more information, please visit our [website: www.nosm.ca/our-community/nprtf](http://www.nosm.ca/our-community/nprtf)

APPENDIX

Healthy and resilient physicians and teams

Mentoring supports:

- Development and launch of a rural mentoring network – <https://ocfp.on.ca/cpd/collaborative-networks/rural-medicine-initiative-network> shared with all FM programs to target rural residents, NOSM rural site directors, rural locum physicians and Rural Ontario Medical Program (ROMP) initially targeting NE, NW and SWLHINs

Locum supports:

- Locum webinar series developed by the OMA in partnership with HFO focused on locum best practices and promoting opportunities in the North.
- Enhanced promotion of rural locums through HFO Regional Advisors (HFO)
- Refreshed 'Locuming in Ontario' – an online guide for new-to-practice physicians interested in locuming (HFO)

Physician resources:

- Needs assessment (NE and NW LHINs)

Welcoming communities

- Recruitment readiness checklist for communities (HFO)
- *Physician Onboarding Guide* with tools to help orient and retain physician recruits. (HFO)
- New physician welcome letters, piloted in the North West, to make recruits better aware of the resources available to support them. (shared by both NW and NE LHIN regions for all new recruits)
- *Nurse Practitioner Recruitment Resource Guide* (HFO)
- Refreshed recruiter orientations, including recruitment and retention best practices, staffing model optimization, marketing, locum utilization, scheduling, immigration, licensing, supervision and succession planning. (HFO)
- locum orientation guide focused on improved locum experiences that can lead to recruitment (HFO)
- Refreshed *Recruitment Essentials* locum module.
http://www.healthforceontario.ca/en/Home/All_Programs/Physician_Recruitment_for_Communities/Recruitment_Essentials
- Recruitment and retention results reported by community recruiters (HFO, jointly with community recruiters)
- Targeted marketing of rural/Northern communities to potential physician recruits (HFO)
- On HFO's free job portal, <https://hfojobs.healthforceontario.ca/en/sg/login> required log-in of job seekers supports better connecting of candidates to communities, including those who are French speaking and/or interested in providing care to Indigenous populations

Skilled, competent rural generalists

- At undergrad level, updated process to review admission criteria and opportunities for exposure to rural/remote (NOSM)
- Promote Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) training to new physician graduates through HFO's Practice Ontario.
- Review of successful initiatives in other jurisdictions to build the rural generalist path (NOSM)
- Improved scheduling systems for 'high-priority' electives including (i) anybody requesting an elective in an underserved or rural community.; (ii) any 3rd or 4th year student that wants to do a residency in rural family medicine; (iii) any family medicine resident from any postgraduate program who wants to do an elective (NOSM)
- Removed financial barriers to application to rural and remote elective experiences (i.e. waive fees for application to rural/remote placement) (NOSM)
- Changed scheduling of rural rotations to happen earlier so that external learners seeking rural rotations in NOSM's distributed campus can have those rotations confirmed in a timely way (NOSM)
- Exploring creation of "rural generalist" over 3 years FM- combined curriculum with training for rural generalism rather than "stand alone" PGY3 time. (NOSM)

Local and regional networks of support

Regional networks for recruitment:

- On HFOJobs, promotion of regional locum coverage through automated recommendations of related locum opportunities in neighbouring communities <https://hfojobs.healthforceontario.ca/en/sg/login>
- Formation of regional recruitment networks in both North East and North West to reduce competition and better leverage local resources with continued joint marketing material for the North (e.g., Northern recruitment zone at recruitment events & previously shared Northern Ontario FPA recruitment initiatives)
- Analysis of recruitment and retention results reported by community recruiters to better understand need and support regional recruitment initiatives (HFO regional advisors/HFO)
- Collaborative initiative among Francophone communities for French-speaking physician recruitment
- Job posters will be easily able to see locum postings in neighboring communities to identify opportunities for collaborative marketing, joining up locums, aligning compensation and schedules. (HFO)
- Northern Ontario job fair at NOSM (in both Sudbury and Thunder Bay) in September 2019 which will include recruitment education event

Clinical networks:

- Ongoing work to support LHIN based networks for referral and patient transfer
- Discussion emerging regarding Local Education Groups and opportunity to form broader networks to support teaching and research