

# What Can Communities Do?

**For a community to be most effective, it is important that they understand the way recruitment works and the many opportunities to add value to the established processes.**

In 2017, NSH developed a Provincial Recruitment Strategy wherein community involvement with physician recruitment was recognized as key to the province's success. Many communities have taken an active role in supporting physician recruitment and retention by showcasing their home as a great place to live, providing a warm welcome to health care providers and their families, and ensuring these physicians and their families integrate well into the community by providing support with housing, employment, social, and cultural connections.

This role extends from recruitment to retention. We want to ensure that, as a province, we are doing everything to make physicians and their families choose to live here – and, more importantly, stay for the long term!

It is helpful to have a dedicated group of individuals from your community that are focused on physician recruitment and retention. A community recruitment and retention committee can create tailored marketing content, host or help with local recruitment events, offer personalized tours,

and provide local contacts for physicians and their families. Take an organized approach and ensure all those in your community with an interest in this work can participate.

*“Our local people have the knowledge to best promote their community to prospective physician recruits.”*

- Pugwash, NS Community Recruitment & Retention Committee

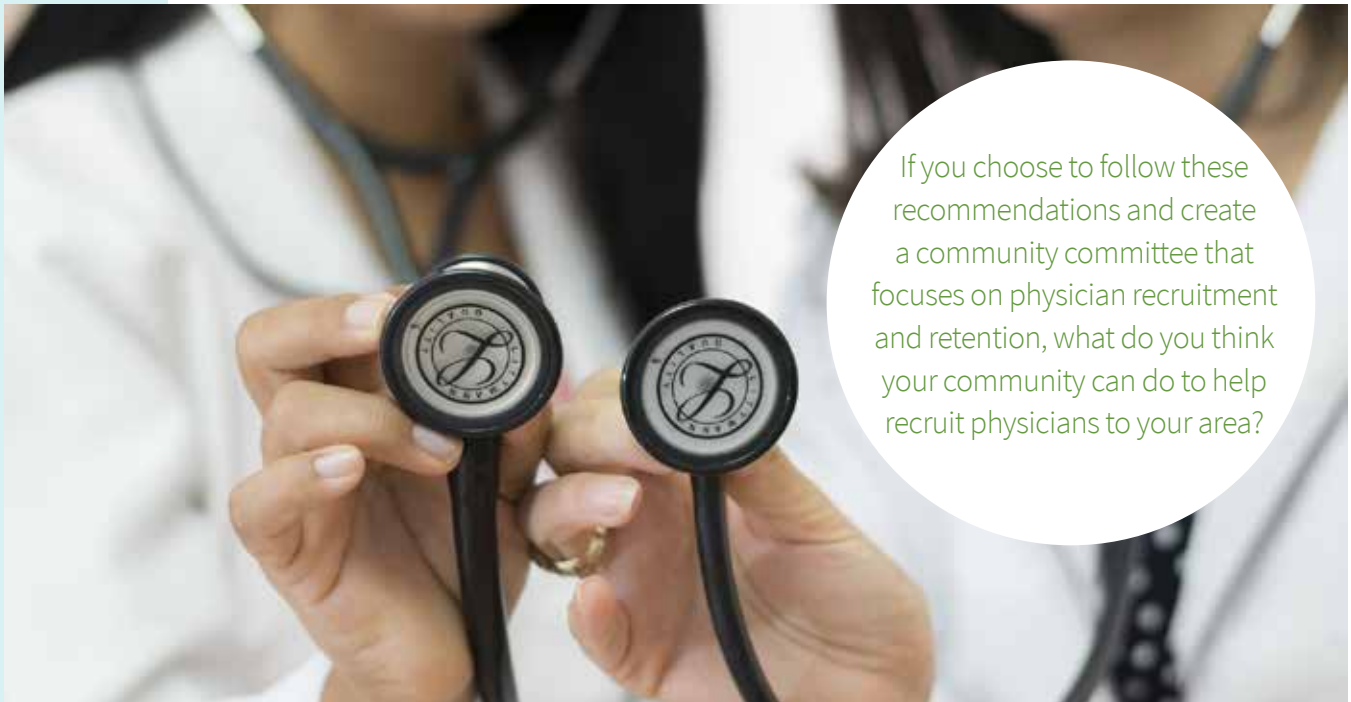


# Collaboration is key.

Include other rural services such as police and fire services, schools, Chamber of Commerce, as they may be able to assist in identifying recruitment challenges for the community as well as some opportunities to work together and remove some barriers.

Once you have established your committee, you can decide on how your meetings will be run, how decisions will be made, and if your group would like to appoint or elect a Chair. A Chair helps ensure your meetings run smoothly and maximize the use of volunteer's time.

Some groups find having a Terms of Reference helpful. [For the Colchester/Truro Recruitment and Retention Committee Terms of Reference visit https://morethanmedicine.ca/toolkit](https://morethanmedicine.ca/toolkit)



If you choose to follow these recommendations and create a community committee that focuses on physician recruitment and retention, what do you think your community can do to help recruit physicians to your area?

Communities are encouraged to form their local recruitment committee whichever way they choose. **Based on conversations with other communities, the following recommendations for membership can help in setting up your committee.**

- Diverse residents of the community (3-5)
- First Nation communities (1-2)
- Health Foundation and auxiliary members (2-4)
- Municipal units (1-2)
- Chamber of Commerce (1-2)
- Service groups like community centres, recreation centres, etc. (1-2)
- Physicians and health care providers (3-5)
- NSH representatives (*physician recruitment consultant, facility/site manager, primary health manager, etc.*)

# Healthy Pictou County Case Study

Physicians in Pictou County became more involved in recruitment to improve access to high-quality health care in their community. Together, in collaboration with community members and other professionals, they formed a Community Recruitment and Retention Committee.

The committee complements NSH's physician recruitment efforts by focusing on attraction, retention, and medical learner relationships. The group began by organizing their committee, obtaining funding through community and private partnerships, and hiring a community navigator. Next, they oversaw the creation of a website that is regularly maintained and updated by their community navigator.

The website is a fresh online tool that showcases the many benefits of starting a medical practice in Pictou County and connects candidates directly to opportunities on NSH's More than Medicine+ website.

To ensure success, the committee requested area municipalities contribute to a local recruitment fund. Recruiting costs money—from renting booths, to paying travelling costs to fairs, and designing and printing materials. This fund was established to cover costs for the development of job fair materials and recruitment packages for locum physicians and medical learners who visit the area.

Welcome packages include a letter, free passes to the YMCA and the Golf Course, and visitor shopping and activity guides. These packages regularly receive positive feedback.

Resource: [healthypictoucounty.ca/](http://healthypictoucounty.ca/)



Healthy Pictou County.ca



# Cape Breton: Recruitment and Retention Case Study



Recruitment efforts are paying off in Cape Breton. Site visits are regularly scheduled and the number of doctors who express interest in Cape Breton continues to grow. Cape Breton has aligned with NSH's provincial recruitment strategy in a coordinated effort to match and retain doctors to local communities. With a strong and diverse team of specialists, a well-supported regional hospital, and a growing team of young doctors—physicians can thrive in Cape Breton.

Members of the Cape Breton Community Recruitment and Retention Committee attribute their recruitment success to help received from the local business community and the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation. They received funding for initiatives such as a website and video featuring stunning Cape Breton landmarks and testimonials from local doctors who love their island lifestyle.

The committee and members of the community also help recruitment by welcoming visitors, helping arrange new physician's travel, and sharing promotional content across Canada and internationally.

Resource: [doctorscapebreton.com/work/](https://doctorscapebreton.com/work/)



# Community Navigator

Some committees have created a paid or volunteer position for a community navigator. The navigator acts as the primary touch point between the community groups and physicians.

A community navigator is an important asset to the community and to NSH's physician recruitment consultant in that area of the province. The navigator is the local expert and provides connection to the local community and its resources.

An ideal fit for this role is a local community member who has extensive knowledge about the region and its amenities, as well as the social and professional networks to help connect the physician and their family to the community. You may also want to consider a recent graduate as a community navigator. Recent graduates are eligible for part of their salary to be funded through Nova Scotia's Labour and Advanced Education's Graduate to Opportunity program.



## Some activities that a community navigator can lead, include:

- Sending welcome letters to new physicians and their family
- Serve as a greeter or help organize a community tour with NSH's physician recruitment consultant
- Organize a casual or formal community welcome dinner with a potential recruit or new physician and their family
- Create opportunities for a physician to meet other families within the community that have like interests or children of similar age ranges
- Invite a new or potential recruit and their family to community events and activities
- Participate in physician recognition events
- Maintain regular contact with the physician and their family
- Help organize special events and tours for visiting medical learners when they are in town; take them biking, hiking or out on the water
- Organize and create promotional material, facility profiles and community profiles for your area
- Attend recruitment events and conferences to source potential candidates
- Survey all physicians on a yearly basis— based on recommendations, take action and follow-up.