

# Municipal District of St. Stephen

Date: March 26, 2025



**To:** Mayor and Members of Council

**Department:** CAO's Office

**Staff Contact:** Jeff Renaud, CAO

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**Subject: Medical Professional Recruitment Policy**

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## Recommendation:

**That** Council approve the Medical Professional Recruitment Policy as presented.

## Background:

It is important to preface this report by reiterating that health care is **NOT** a municipal responsibility. The responsibility for the health care crisis we are now dealing with lies solely with the New Brunswick government and every resident, business and organization needs to hold the Province accountable for resolving this issue. Despite the recommendations in this report, management wants to make it clear that the municipality should **NOT** be in the recruitment business for any health care providers and that this policy is only being recommended as a way of competing for the scarce resources that are available in New Brunswick. Council and the community must work diligently to lobby the Provincial government to make the much-needed changes to the health care system to ensure **ALL** residents have proper access to immediate health care. Once the health care system has been properly fortified, this policy will no longer be required.

The attached policy will look at many different options related to the attraction of primary health care practitioners.

## **Financial/Analysis:**

The proposed policy (attached) looks at the attraction of three different types of health care practitioners: Family Physicians, Specialists (including ER), and Nurse Practitioners. After careful review, management is proposing the following incentives:

New Family Physicians: \$125,000 in return for a 5-year commitment of full-time service.

Established Family Physicians (out of Province): A key principle in the proposed recruitment program is not to entice or incent a practicing physician from another community to leave their patients and move to St. Stephen. However, management realizes that some established physicians from outside of New Brunswick may be looking to move to New Brunswick because of the policies/situations they are facing in their current province. There are also times when an established family physician has decided to move from their current province/county for personal reasons which have nothing to do with an incentive. These physicians may be looking to New Brunswick as a place to settle and if St. Stephen had an incentive, it could tip the scales in our favour when it comes to deciding which New Brunswick community they will settle in. In this case, the incentive will cover moving and set up costs and not necessarily tuition or education reimbursement. Management recommends that MDSS offer a \$75,000 incentive paid over five years to an existing out of Province family physician that is interested in settling here and opening a full-time practice for at least 5 years.

Specialists/Emergency Room Physicians: Management recommends working with staff from Charlotte County Hospital and Horizon Health to identify those specialists for which there is a critical need and provide the option of a \$75,000 incentive to attract them to St. Stephen for a minimum five-year return of service. In addition to attracting specialist physicians, management is recommending that we extend that funding to include ER physicians at Charlotte County Hospital. With the shortage of Family Doctors and Nurse Practitioners, many residents are ending up at the emergency room. This has put an exceptional strain on the staff in the ER. Given the complex and varied nature of the patients using this centralized ER, a higher skill set is required. Management recommends that MDSS provide a \$75,000 incentive to ER trained family physicians that will take on a full-time position at Charlotte County Hospital. The funding would be payable over a five-year period and would be in exchange for a five-year commitment of service.

### International Medical Graduates (IMG's):

IMG's represent a great opportunity for MDSS to attract physicians to work in underserved communities in New Brunswick. Management recommends that they be eligible under the recruitment program to receive an incentive once they are enrolled in good standing with a Canadian Medical School completing their residency or observership requirements. The incentive would be up to \$125,000 paid in \$25,000 installments in exchange for a minimum five-year commitment of service.

### Nurse Practitioners:

Nurse Practitioners (NP's) are a tremendously underutilized resource in the health care system although that has started to change. Hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities are using NP's as an essential part of the patient care team. Although, funding or an incentive is not required to support their education, it may be in the MDSS best interest to offer an incentive to any new fully licensed NP that is employed full-time in St. Stephen. An incentive of \$10,000 is recommended - \$5,000 when their employment at a St. Stephen job has started, and another \$5,000 after 6 months, in return for a two-year commitment of service in St. Stephen.

### Recruitment Consultants:

As the recruitment business for physicians becomes increasingly competitive, the opportunity to use specialized consultants or "headhunters" for this service becomes more palatable. Management recommends that where a consultant can bring forward a physician that has signed with St. Stephen, that a fee of not more than \$25,000 be paid. This service is to be financed out of the funds that would normally be paid to the physician. For example, if a specialist physician would be entitled to a \$75,000 incentive, they would receive \$50,000 with the additional \$25,000 paid to the recruiter. No exclusivity contract will be signed with any specific recruitment firm/individual and MDSS will consider all companies that represent physicians that would be eligible to establish in St. Stephen.

### Financial Impacts:

The program being proposed herein represents a new, and currently unfunded, program. Management is recommending that MDSS Council establish a new budget line within the annual operating budget in the amount of \$100,000 to support the proposed program. Any unused funds each year should be transferred to reserve for future use.

### **Conclusion:**

The purpose of the attached policy is to formalize MDSS offerings in terms of attracting certain health care professionals. Ensuring a clear direction when attracting professionals will allow us to target our efforts and be as efficient as possible.

It is also recommended that this policy be reviewed from time to time by management to determine its relevance and the need to update it based on trends and changes in the health sector.

The policy is to be implemented subject to available budget and deviations from the policy should be brought forward for Council consideration.

### **Attachments:**

[Medical Professional Recruitment Policy](#)

Category:		Effective Date: March 26, 2025
Policy No. :		Date of Next Review:

## **Medical Professional Recruitment Policy**

### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to guide and focus the municipal efforts to recruit the most needed medical professionals in the community. With limited resources, it is important that efforts target primary health care practitioners as they are the foundation of a proactive and healthy community for residents and businesses. In addition to the attraction of primary health care practitioners, MDSS may also choose to attract certain specialty physicians where an extreme need in the community has been identified and the funding allows.

In addition to targeting family physicians, MDSS will also review and assess the need for other supports that could impact the supply and availability of clinical health care practitioners in St. Stephen.

### **2. APPLICABILITY**

This policy will apply to all municipal efforts to attract health care practitioners to practice in the community. Although health care is not a municipal responsibility, MDSS has stepped up to attract primary health care practitioners because of the extensive need in the community. This policy will only apply as long as there is a need and funding and resources are available to support the attraction program.

### **3. GENERAL**

MDSS shall annually assess the need for primary health care practitioners and specialists in the area and determine how many (if any) are needed and will budget accordingly.

#### **Family Medicine Physicians:**

MDSS may offer a financial incentive for family medicine students, residents or recently graduated family physicians in the amount of \$125,000, payable in \$25,000 annual installments in return for a five-year commitment of full-time service to the Municipal District of St. Stephen. Family physicians will be required to operate a full-time community-based clinic within the Municipal District. This incentive is not intended to apply to family physicians that will work only at the hospital, but it will support physicians that will work at a Charlotte County Hospital or other organization where patients are rostered to the physician. This \$125,000 incentive will not be paid to an existing physician that will be leaving an established practice elsewhere in the Province of New Brunswick.

Family Medicine Physician/Emergency Medicine:

MDSS may offer a financial incentive to a Family Physician Emergency Medicine Doctor in the amount of \$75,000 in exchange for a 5-year commitment of full-time service to Charlotte County Hospital. This incentive is to be paid in annual \$15,000 installments and is to be in place only while the shortage of CCFP/ER doctors is considered acute.

Specialist Physicians:

MDSS may offer a financial incentive for a medical student, resident or recently graduated Specialist Physician, where such skills have been deemed in critical need in the community. The incentive will total \$75,000 payable in \$15,000 annual installments in return for a five-year commitment of full-time service to MDSS. Critical need specialties will be determined by MDSS in consultation with Charlotte County Hospital, Horizon Health and other health related organizations. Under exceptional circumstances, MDSS may consider paying an incentive of up to \$125,000.

International Medical Graduates (IMG):

The Municipal District of St. Stephen will consider offering a financial incentive to a Family Physician International Medical Graduate (IMG) provided they have relocated to New Brunswick, are eligible to work in New Brunswick, and are enrolled in good standing with a Canadian Medical School and/or actively studying for/taking accreditation exams. The incentive can be up to \$125,000 paid in \$25,000 installments, in return for a five-year commitment of service.

Established Family Physicians:

MDSS will not provide a financial incentive to a physician that is leaving an existing practice and patients in another community in New Brunswick to move to St. Stephen. However, Council will consider providing a \$75,000 incentive to any existing family physician that relocates to St. Stephen from outside of New Brunswick provided they are fully licensed to practice medicine in New Brunswick and provided they will open a clinic-based practice here and will roster their own patients. The incentive is to be paid in \$15,000 installments in return for a five-year commitment of service.

Nurse Practitioners:

MDSS may provide a \$10,000 incentive for new graduates to choose a St. Stephen position. The incentive will pay \$5,000 when the student starts a position in St. Stephen and another \$5,000 after six months, in return for a two-year commitment of service to St. Stephen.

### Recruitment Consultants:

Where a recruitment firm or individual brings forward a candidate for the family physician or specialist program and that candidate signs a return of service agreement with the Municipal District of St. Stephen, a recruitment fee may be paid. A maximum fee of \$25,000 per recruit is possible. In instances where a recruitment firm is used, the \$125,000 or \$75,000 incentive is capped, and all recruitment fees shall be paid out of the incentive for the physician (ie. \$25,000 recruitment fee, \$100,000 incentive to the physician or \$25,000 recruitment fee, \$50,000 to the physician).

No exclusive contract will be signed with any specific company and MDSS will consider any and all companies that represent physicians that would agree to establish in St. Stephen.

**Council reserves the right to review every individual situation if warranted and may adjust the terms of this policy as needed to attract the health care professionals required.**

Approved:

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Allan MacEachern, Mayor

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Jeff Renaud, Chief Administrative Officer