



**Rural and Remote
Division of Family Practice**
An FPSC initiative



RETENTION AND SUSTAINABILITY FUND EVALUATION 2022-23

Submitted to:

Rural and Remote Division of Family
Practice

Submitted By:

Reichert and Associates
Program Evaluation & Research



REICHERT & ASSOCIATES
PROGRAM EVALUATION & RESEARCH

**PHOTO: Gabriola Health Centre 10 year Celebration August 2022 on the
traditional unceded territories of the Snunymux**

(L to R) Dr Francois Bosman, Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley, Nancy Rowan, Dianne
Cornish, Dr Don Sutherland ([Gabriola Healthcare Foundation](https://www.gabriolahealthcare.ca))

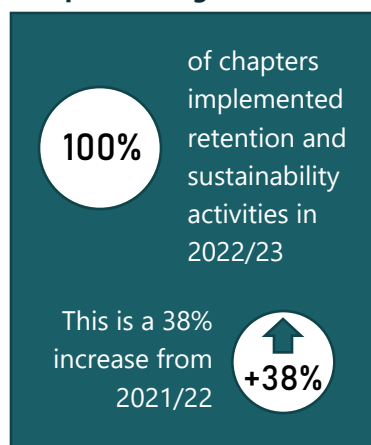
BACKGROUND

The Rural and Remote Division received \$60,000 in funding from the FPSC for retention and sustainability in the 2022-23 fiscal year. For the last 2 years, the Division provided funding to its Chapters and members to enable innovative approaches to supporting retention and sustainability of family practice. Through these microgrants each Chapter can take a unique, tailored approach to supporting its members.

The evaluation of this funding included a survey that was completed by chapter coordinators (n=12 out of 13), an interview with a family physician (n=1), and job posting data from HealthMatchBC.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

This survey was completed by 12/13 chapter coordinators representing 12/13 chapters within the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice. **All 12 chapter respondents (100%) reported implementing retention and sustainability activities within their chapters.** In 2021-22, 8 of 11 chapters who responded to the survey (82%) had implemented retention and sustainability activities. This year, a greater number of chapters used the funds to support recruitment efforts, including developing materials and attending conferences. This is an increase of 38% over last year. A possible factor of this increase may be the amount of funding: Year 1 was part of an infrastructure residual at \$350 per member and this year it was \$4000 per chapter. Note, many of these activities were achieved amalgamating different funding streams inside or outside the dedicated retention and sustainability envelope. For example, physician sessional costs were not eligible so these were captured under FPSC Infrastructure Funding. Additionally, partners were critical to this work including the Gabriola Healthcare Foundation who produced the website and social marketing campaign 'Be our Docs'. The District of Clearwater funded the attendance at the Rural Health Conference below.



Half of the chapters reported producing recruitment materials (i.e., website, video, and brochure) and **attended a conference to recruit.** (Fig. 1)

Figure 1: What activities have you done with your retention & sustainability funds? (n=10)

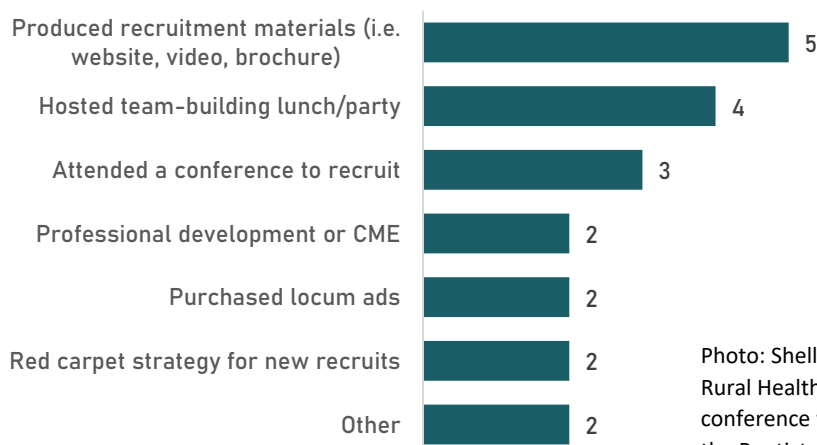


Photo: Shelley Sim, Chapter Coordinator, Clearwater at the Rural Health Conference in Penticton in May of 2022. This conference was held on the traditional unceded territories of the Penticton Indian band. The District of Clearwater funded the booth registration.

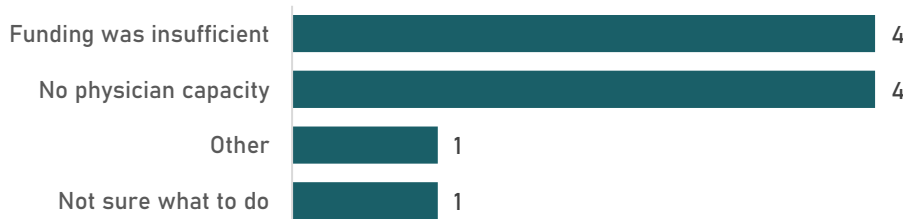
Additional comments that respondents shared: (Fig 1)

- A welcome and orientation manual was established for the new physicians joining the region.
- A physician recruitment website was created.
- Physician retreat.
- Purchased advertising and are currently producing a video.
- Physicians were supported to meet as a whole group and discuss recruitment and retention priorities.
- Attended BC Rural Health Conference to gain insights into rural providers' needs and interests and help primary care providers understand how RRDFP fits within divisions.

"[The doctor] informed me how happy the last locum was with the Welcome basket" – chapter coordinator

When asked about the challenges or barriers they might have experienced, **4 out of 7** of the respondents reported that the **funding was insufficient**, and lack of **physician capacity (Fig. 2)**. These challenges were similar to those identified in 2021-22.

Figure 2: What were some challenges or barriers you have experienced? (n=7)



Further explanation on their responses:

- Regional funding was used for one event, and the other event fell within the next budget year. If the budget remained the same, there would be no funds left for the year. However, they were grateful for the support they had received.
- Chapter coordinators face a steep learning curve in recruitment and retention as they lack dedicated personnel or departments unlike other divisions. This was identified as a disadvantage in comparison to other organizations.

"We are the only medical clinic in town so there always has to be a physician on duty. Trying to rent a venue and serve lunch was costly but I believe everyone had a good time." – chapter coordinator



"Due to the size of our physician group, funding was able to support an initial meeting but no additional activities." – chapter coordinator

55% (6 of 11) of the respondents agreed that these **activities/funds made a difference** for patients, providers, or their community while the other **45% were unsure** about whether these activities/funds made a difference. **(Fig. 3)**

Figure 3 – 55% of chapters respondents reported that the funds made a difference in their community (n=11)



Examples provided of how the funds made a difference included:

- The event provided an opportunity for physicians to reconnect post-pandemic, as the usual face-to-face get together was disrupted.
- Actively recruiting physicians to address the current shortage. Two new physicians are starting in April and September. This is expected to reduce wait times and prevent burnout.
- Locums who received gift baskets and attended lunches have indicated that they will come back to locum again in the community.

Some of the resources created by this funding include:

Chapter	Resource Created	Link
Revelstoke	Burnout resource	Burnout Resource (divisionsbc.ca)
Bella Bella	Recruitment website	https://bellabellamedical.ca/
Interior Chapters	Recruitment website	https://www.practicehere.ca/
Gabriola Island	Recruitment website & video	http://beourdoctor.ca https://youtu.be/EMQrjOeqGyU
Galiano Island	Recruitment video	Galiano Fina Delivery h264.mp4 - Google Drive
Regional Collaboration with Northern BC Divisions	Barriers to Recruitment and Retention in Northern BC report	2022-04-25 Northern Divisions Recruitment and Retention Project Final.pdf (divisionsbc.ca)

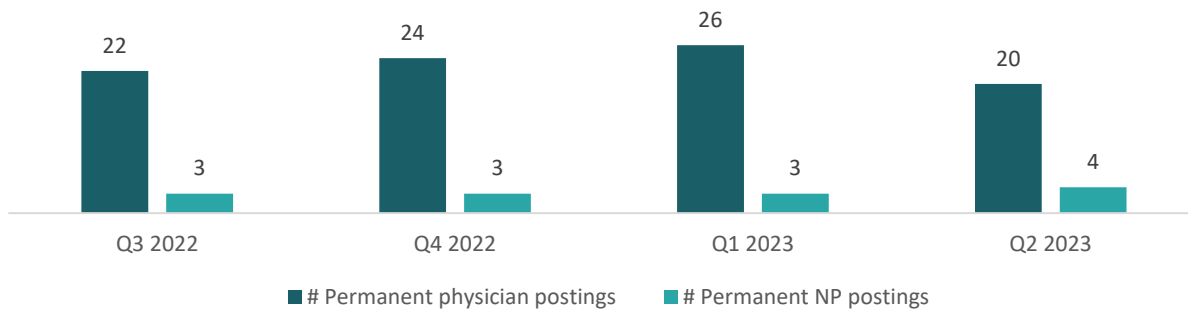
HealthMatchBC Data

Based on publicly available data on HealthMatchBC¹, the evaluation team tracked the number of job postings each quarter² in rural and remote chapter communities between July 2022 and May 2023. The data shows an increase in job postings in the fall and winter months, and a decrease in spring 2023. For the 20 rural and remote division communities that are listed on HealthMatchBC, four (20%) did not report any recruitment needs over the year. Twelve reported job postings that were partially met, (i.e., some spaces were filled, and they are still recruiting more), two had all recruitment needs met (i.e., no job postings in most recent data) and two had more job postings than the previous year (see Appendix A). With the number of different variables that impact the recruitment and retention of primary care providers, it is difficult to attribute change to the retention and sustainability fund directly, however this data provides the ability to monitor which communities are in most need, and to see how that fluctuates. It may be possible to detect patterns in activities and number of job postings on HealthMatchBC over time.

¹ [Find a Job - Health Match BC - British Columbia Physician, Nurse, and Allied Health Recruitment - Canada](#)

² Data was pulled in the middle of each quarter: July 2022, October 2022, February 2023, May 2023

Figure 3. # permanent primary care provider postings on HealthMatchBC for RRDFP communities



NEXT STEPS

Respondents' recommendations for improving Recruitment and Retention:

- Often the dependable employees are overlooked, so retention should be prioritized.
- Social media was a useful tool for connecting with medical students, new graduates and international prospects in their region.
- The Physician Recruitment and Retention Network has been beneficial in expanding the chapters' reach.

"Even when you are at full capacity in your area do not stop with Recruitment and Retention as we do not know what tomorrow brings. Also, how good would it be to promote your area so well that people are waiting for a vacancy to open so they can practice there."
 – chapter coordinator



Left: Bella Bella Physician Retreat left to right Dr Lauri-Ann Shearer, Dr Chris Gooch, Rhonda Orobko Chapter Coordinator and MSA PM, Dr Adam Sandell, Dr Greg Costello, Dr Christina Thompson, Dr David Edwards.



Right: Dr. Marcene Phillips and family arriving in Clearwater

Appendix A

Community	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Spark
Ahousaht	0	0	0	0	
Alert Bay	1	1	3	3	
Ashcroft	3	3	4	3	
Bella Bella	1	1	1	1	
Bella Coola	3	3	2	3	
Clearwater	2	2	1	1	
Fort Nelson	0	0	1	0	
Gabriola Island	2	2	2	1	
Hazelton	3	5	5	3	
Lillooet	2	2	1	1	
Lytton	2	2	1	1	
Merritt	2	2	3	3	
Pemberton	1	1	1	0	
Port Alice	0	0	0	0	
Port Hardy	2	4	6	4	
Port McNeil	1	1	1	1	
Revelstoke	0	0	0	0	
Salt Spring	3	4	5	3	
Tofino	0	0	1	1	
Ucluelet	0	0	0	0	