

# **Proposal for Guelph Physician Recruiter Funding**

**Submitted by Guelph General Hospital  
and Guelph Family Health Team**

NOVEMBER 2025



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## Executive Summary

**Guelph General Hospital (GGH)** and **Guelph Family Health Team (Guelph FHT)** are jointly seeking funding to support the creation of a dedicated, full-time Guelph Physician Recruiter position over an initial five-year term. This strategic investment addresses critical physician shortages across hospitalist, specialist, and primary care roles that are impacting healthcare access and continuity within the Guelph area. A focused recruitment effort is essential to ensure the local healthcare system keeps pace with continued population growth, rising physician retirement rates, and increasingly complex patient needs.

The proposed Physician Recruiter will lead comprehensive outreach, engagement, and retention initiatives designed to attract skilled physicians to the Guelph community. Acting as a central resource, the recruiter will build relationships with medical schools, residency programs, and professional networks to proactively identify and secure candidates who align with local needs. Additionally, the role will focus on physician retention strategies, helping new recruits integrate into the community and foster long-term commitments to the area.

An initial five-year funding commitment is essential to recruit a skilled candidate and allow them to time to acquire knowledge of the local healthcare landscape, support relationship-building and strategic networking to enable successful recruitment activities. Sustained investment in this position is necessary for the long-term achievement of Guelph's physician recruitment need and goals.

## Rationale and Expected Impact

Current physician recruitment efforts are **fragmented and under-resourced**. A comprehensive and coordinated recruitment strategy is needed **to sustain Guelph's physician workforce** and ensure long-term system viability. A full-time Guelph Physician Recruiter will **enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of physician recruitment efforts** across our community. This dedicated role will bring continuity, consistency, and professionalism to the recruitment process, leading to increased success in attracting and retaining physicians. This coordinated approach will alleviate administrative burden and eliminate duplicative activities of individual physicians, practices, and organizations ensuring **optimization of scarce resources and alignment with broader healthcare system goals**.

Over an initial five-year period, this investment will target the current gaps and future needs of identified community, specialist and primary care resources. Achievement strategic targets will yield improved health system access, greater attachment to team-based care and better population health outcomes for the Guelph area.

## Alignment with System-Wide Priorities

The goals of a dedicated Guelph Physician Recruiter support provincial health system priorities of attaching **2 million individuals to with primary care** with 100% local attachment to team-based care by 2029. Additionally, the role compliments the **Primary Care Workforce Stabilization Strategy** by building health human resource capacity and sustainability.

Regionally, the proposal aligns with Guelph Wellington Ontario Health Team's overarching **physician recruitment strategy**, targeting recruitment for underserved neighbourhoods, ensuring more inclusive and accessible primary care locally.

## Current Guelph Physician Workforce Challenges

### Community and Hospital-Based Specialists

In 2024 Wellington Dufferin Guelph completed an environmental scan of the local healthcare landscape and identified the following critical gaps in Guelph medical specialties:

- **Cardiology:** Shortfall of 4 specialists
- **Pediatrics:** Shortfall of 2 specialists
- **Emergency Medicine:** Shortfall of 5-6 Specialists
- **Hospital medicine Specialists** – Shortfall of 3-5 FTE
- **Internal Medicine Specialists** – 5 to 10 Specialists
- **Surgical Specialists** – Shortfall of 4-5 Surgeons of different specialists
- **Dermatology:** A current vacancy
- **Anesthesiology:** A current vacancy has persisted for over 18 months, now considered a community-level emergency due to its impact on timely surgical care access. Total vacancy is now at 4-5 FTE.
- **Psychiatry:** Additional resources are needed to address extensive wait times (9 months) for community-based psychiatry services, with special attention to children and adolescents populations.

### Primary Care Physicians

In addition, primary care in Guelph is under growing strain. With an annual population growth rate of **2.1% and 25% of family physicians expected to retire within five years**, the community faces significant challenge maintaining access to primary care. These estimates project a future need of **7 to 8 new family physicians each year** over the next 5 years. As of 2023, 10% of Guelph residents are without a regular primary care provider, resulting in increased use of walk-in clinics and emergency services.

In summary, an estimated **50+ physicians** are needed over the next 5yrs to support the current and growing needs of the Guelph community.

## **Personal and Professional Incentives**

A physician's decisions about where to establish practice is influenced by a blend of personal and professional incentives. Spousal employment opportunities, work-life balance, appeal of the community, and alignment with long-term life goals were identified as important considerations by 93% of current medical students.

Determining practice location is also impacted by professional factors including, scope of practice options and access to continued education opportunities. Ongoing professional guidance and peer support help mitigate these challenges and enhance satisfaction and retention.

In certain circumstances, financial incentives such as covering relocation costs, signing bonuses or housing support can prove effective to attracting physician recruits. While these expenses have not been built into base budget projections, considerations on how these strategies might be employed in areas of critical need are being explored.

## **Strategic Funding Partners**

Community partnerships play a critical role in supporting physician recruitment efforts in Guelph. Identified funding partners include:

- **Guelph General Hospital**
- **Guelph Family Health Team**
- **Guelph Wellington Ontario Health Team**

Together, these organizations will provide resources that align efforts with local physician recruitment goals.

## **Governance Structure**

The governance model for the Guelph Physician Recruiter proposal designates **GGH** and **Guelph FHT** as lead organizations, jointly responsible for overseeing physician recruiter hiring, performance management and accountability activities with regular reporting to stakeholders. As co-leads, GGH and Guelph FHT will engage key community partners, to identify local physician recruitment priorities and targets. This collaborative governance approach is designed to enhance transparency, drive continuous improvement, and support coordinated physician recruitment across the community. The recruiter will be formally an employee of GGH.

## Purpose of Funding

GGH and Guelph FHT are jointly seeking **\$45,000 in funding annually for five years** to support the implementation of a Guelph Physician Recruiter position. The Physician Recruiter will be responsible for developing and executing a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy. Activities include fostering partnerships with medical schools and coordinating marketing and outreach efforts both within Canada and on an international scale. Additionally, the role will provide critical support for onboarding, integration, and long-term retention of new physicians entering the Guelph community. The physician recruiter will complete regular reporting on key performance indicators (KPIs) to evaluate overall impact on physician workforce stability, primary care attachment rates and health system performance. Ongoing measurement will be used to identify systems trends, achievement of recruitment targets and return on investment to funders.

## Position Overview – Physician Recruiter

<b>Title</b>	Full-Time Guelph Physician Recruiter
<b>Term</b>	5-Year Contract
<b>Salary &amp; Benefits</b>	\$95,000/year + 25% benefits = \$118,750/year
<b>Total 5-Year Compensation</b>	\$593,750
<b>Reporting</b>	Jointly to GGH and Guelph FHT Leadership

### Role Responsibilities

- In collaboration with GGH and Guelph FHT leadership identify and develop local physician recruitment priorities, targets and workplans
- Develop and implement a Guelph physician recruitment and retention strategy
- Develop and manage recruitment tools, job postings, and marketing materials
- Represent Guelph at recruitment fairs and networking events
- Coordinate municipal, housing, and community services to assist new physicians in relocating and integrating into the community
- Map International and out of province requirement pathways and supports
- Plan and host promotion events and site tours
- Coordinate physician mentorship and community integration activities
- Monitor and report on recruitment key performance indicators



# Budget Summary

Item	Annual Cost	5-Year Total
Recruiter Salary + Benefits	\$118,000	\$590,000.00
Travel & Marketing Expenses	\$20,000	\$100,000.00
Recruitment Tools & Software <i>(One-time)</i>	\$5,000	\$5,000
<b>Total Funding Required</b>	<b>\$143,000.00</b>	<b>\$695,000.00</b>

Funding Partner Contribution	Annual	5-Year Total
Guelph General Hospital Funding	\$36,000	\$180,000.00
Guelph Family Health Team	\$15,000	\$75,000.00
Guelph Wellington OHT Funding	\$10,000	\$50,000.00
Wellington County Funding Request*	\$28,000	\$140,000.00
City of Guelph Funding Request	\$50,000	\$250,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$143,000.00</b>	<b>\$695,000.00</b>

\*Assumes 40% of \$70,000 ask from Wellington County

## Outcomes

Outcomes of physician recruiter funding will be reported annually to funders, capturing the total number of successfully recruited physicians and accompanied by a narrative identifying health system impacts and patient attachment rates.

## Conclusion

The proposal of a dedicated, full-time Physician Recruiter represents a strategic, future-focused investment in the health of the Guelph community. The creation of a structured, centralized approach to physician recruitment and retention **will improve access to care of our community**.