

- Tour the practice and any other corresponding medical facilities where the candidate will be expected to provide service.
- Tour the local schools including colleges or universities.
- Arrange time for meetings with other physicians in the practice.
- Arrange for meetings with practice, hospital and clinic staff.
- Provide an opportunity for the candidate and family to be exposed to other members of the community. This may range from a formal gathering in a pre-arranged meeting space to a picnic at a local park.
- Arrange for the candidate and family to enjoy a meal at a favorite local restaurant.
- Arrange for the candidate to meet with a realtor and other relocation professionals.
- Allow informal time for the candidate and family to explore on their own.
- Arrange for baby-sitting services, if needed.
- Consider the employment needs of the spouse and arrange time for him/her to meet with potential employers.
- Allow time for a formal discussion of the details of the practice offer.

E. Conduct the in-person interview

Choose a place where the appropriate parties and the candidate will be uninterrupted for a period of time. During the in-person interview, be sure to evaluate both the professional qualifications and personal preferences of the candidate. Consider the candidate's physical appearance as well as his/her personality. Is the candidate well dressed and on time for the interview? Is he/she confident and assured? Ambitious and resourceful? Too driven or too timid for a rural practice? Too reliant on technology beyond your capabilities? What are his/her professional and personal goals and expectations? How does he/she feel about your intended call coverage and weekend scheduling? If community-mindedness is a practice requirement or a welcome attribute, is the candidate willing to contribute time to activities beyond office hours?

F. Discuss the financial details

It is likely during the in-person interview that you will need to be prepared to discuss financial details of the practice opportunity. You may want to obtain legal advice about the compliance of your package to state codes and federal laws. When compiling the package, consider some of the following:

- How much is the physician worth to your facility and community and how will the position be funded? Will you provide a set annual income, a guaranteed salary, a fee for service compensation or some sort of percentage-based incentive?
- Does the practice opportunity include a buy-in option? At what point in time and what are the details of the arrangement?
- How will the expenses of office, staff and equipment be paid? Can you afford to reduce office space rental for a period of time?
- Will you share staff and staff expenses? Can you provide start-up equipment and offer a specific payback arrangement? Who will pay for continuing education?
- Can you offer relocation expenses? If so, what is your limit?
- Who will pay for malpractice insurance?
- Are you able to offer other benefits such as health insurance, vacation or sick leave, or funds for professional dues payments?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

A. Make your choice

Get together with the decision-makers and review the visit with the candidate and his/her family. How well did they match your practice and community?

B. Make your offer

Send a letter to the candidate detailing verbal discussions held during the visit to clarify understanding between all parties. Follow-up the letter with a phone call confirming interest in the candidate for the practice opportunity. Once the candidate agrees to commit, prepare and send the employment contract and be prepared to negotiate beyond the initial offer. While it may be best for both the practice and the candidate to obtain legal advice during this phase of the recruitment, below are some topics to consider including in the formal contract:

- Define the type of employment. Will the physician be hospital-employed, part of a group practice or work under some other type of employment structure?
- Detail the compensation package. Include bonus structure, advancement schedule and any signing bonuses.
- Detail the benefits package.
- Detail the practice specifications including schedule, call duty, expected facility coverage and regional coverage consideration.
- Detail any expectations or restrictions beyond patient care. Will the candidate be allowed to complete continuing education during office hours? Will he/she be required to conduct community education? Is professional membership and involvement a requirement?
- Be sure to include language to provide for termination.

MAINTAIN CONTACT PRIOR TO THE PHYSICIAN'S ARRIVAL

Once the agreement is signed, maintain contact with your new physician and family before their actual arrival. Consider assigning someone to act as a liaison with the physician to answer questions about the practice, the community and the upcoming move. This person may arrange periodic contact through a variety of means such as mailings, brochures, news clippings, a newspaper subscription, school newsletters, photos about happenings at the practice and more.

WELCOME YOUR NEW PHYSICIAN AND FAMILY

Be sure to arrange for activities for the new physician and family to help them become comfortable with their new surroundings as soon as possible. The more exposure your physician has, the better chances he/she has of gaining new patients. The more involved the family is, the better their chances of becoming a part of their new community. Whether it is a welcome reception or a school-sponsored sporting event, helping your community newcomers feel right at home is the best way to ensure that they, and your new physician, will want to stay.

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The University of Kansas Medical Center Rural Health Education and Services



CHECKLIST FOR RECRUITING PHYSICIANS

The search for the ideal physician for your practice or community can be an extensive, expensive and difficult process. To assist you in the procedure, we have compiled a list of questions and considerations to be made while conducting your search.

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To determine if your facility or practice will have the time and resources, or if you will need additional assistance, consider some of the following:

- What steps have you taken in the past that have been successful when recruiting health care professionals?
- What expertise do you currently have for managing a recruitment program?
- What kind of budget do you have available for recruiting health professionals? Costs to consider will include the creation of marketing materials, placement of advertisements in regional and national publications and online, hiring of a recruitment firm, communication via mail and telephone, travel and entertainment for site visits by potential candidates and family members.

Factors to consider when deciding whether or not to hire a recruitment firm:

- How great is your need for a new physician?
- How effective have your past efforts to recruit been?
- How much time or expertise does your current recruitment staff have?
- Is there the potential for unwanted influences internally or within the community that might inhibit the recruitment process?

If the answers to the above questions lead you to consider hiring a recruitment firm, think about the following:

- How much experience does the firm you are considering have?
- Does the firm you are considering offer references that you may check?
- What are the firm's fees? Fees can run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

THE FOLLOWING CHECKLIST IS DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE PLANNING FOR THE SEARCH AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS.

A. Identify the needs and assets of your practice opportunity. Honestly ask these questions and come to a consensus on the answers:

- In addition to a specified degree and valid state medical license, what other medical qualifications are you looking for in the new physician?
- Why do you need a new physician? Is the practice growing? Do you need to fill in or balance out an existing workload? Is there a need for a physician with a different cultural background to enhance existing services?
- What other responsibilities will your new physician be required to take on? For example, clinic coverage in neighboring counties?
- What is the daily patient count?
- What kinds of opportunities do you offer for growth beyond existing services?
- Will you consider candidates that have interests in complementing areas of practice?
- What is your organization's management structure and philosophy and what benefits do these features offer a potential candidate?
- How would you describe the "culture" of your office environment and what kind of personality might fit well in that atmosphere?
- What levels of staff expertise and technology does your facility offer a new physician?
- What kinds of other specialties are available locally and what benefits do these offer a potential candidate?
- What are the patient demographics of your practice?
- Does your community participate in any federally designated underserved programs that may benefit your search?
- What financial considerations and other incentives are you offering the new physician, such as: fee schedule, compensation/salary, contract guarantees, and benefits.

B. Identify the qualities your community has to offer. Remember: Often the ability to attract a candidate relies in large part on amenities available to the spouse and other family members:

- Describe the characteristics/personality of your community. Are new people and ideas welcome? Do your leaders consider the needs of the medical community when making decisions? Does your community have a family oriented environment, a large percentage of seniors, plenty of activities for all ages?
- What kind of recreational, cultural and social outlets are available within your community? How close are other attractions and retail venues?
- What types of schools does your community offer and what can you say about the quality of education available?
- What kinds of volunteer activities are available? How much would new members of a medical professional's family be expected to participate?
- What other industries are available in your community? What kinds of job opportunities might you offer a spouse or family members seeking employment?
- Does your community offer a range of housing options for a candidate and his/her family?
- How would you rate your community's tolerance and acceptance level toward religious/political/social beliefs?
- Be prepared to answer other questions and concerns about your community such as safety or crime factors, population numbers and growth or decline, cost of living and even accommodations for special needs.

C. Conduct the search:

- Prepare a description of your opportunity. Be sure to include information about both the practice and the community.
- Review the internal and external resources available for the search.

Internal:

- Does your human resources staff have access to everything it needs to conduct the search?
- Are there contacts within your community or existing base of medical professionals who might know of a physician looking to relocate?
- Could local professional groups, such as the chamber of commerce or economic development organization, include literature about your facility and opportunity in their marketing materials? What other kinds of support can your community stakeholders offer?

External:

- Consider approaching residency programs, medical schools, and professional associations that specialize in the type of physician you need.
- Explore the advertising cost of professional journals, although you may find these to be cost prohibitive and ineffective. Instead, consider contacting organizations in your state that offer services for medical professionals, such as hospital associations, universities, government agencies or outreach programs.
- Attend medical and recruitment conferences and fairs that will allow you to display information about your community.
- Contact programs that emphasize funds in return for services, including the Kansas Bridging Plan, Kansas Locum Tenens, the Kansas Medical Student Loan Program and the National Health Service Corps.
- Be sure the World Wide Web is among the resources currently being used.

ONCE YOU RECEIVE THE CANDIDATE'S INFORMATION, THE WORK REALLY BEGINS

A. Scrutinize the curriculum vitae before making a decision on who to call:

- Decide if the candidate's credentials match those you need.
- If you are using a recruiter, consider the candidate's answers to questions about their professional goals. Have they supplied information about their personal needs and goals as well?
- Even the candidate's paperwork can provide insight into his/her working habits. Is it neat and well organized, or does it seem hastily prepared?
- Choose between five and ten candidates to pursue to the next level of the search.

B. Conduct a telephone interview:

- Describe your opportunity in great detail.
- Ask the candidate thorough questions about his/her professional and personal expectations.
- Ask the candidate questions about his/her family needs.
- Be sure to obtain any additional detail you may need to conduct further inquiries on the candidate.

C. Screen candidates:

Once you have narrowed your choice of candidates, conduct a pre-screening check to determine those most appropriate to bring to your community for a visit. Consider checking references beyond those supplied by the candidate, such as a residency coordinator or facility director where the candidate is currently practicing. You may prefer to check credentials after a visit in order to verify claims made by the candidate.

Formulate questions that will provide you insight into the candidate's professional capabilities as well as his/her organizational and relationship-building skills. Does he/she have the appropriate level of talent and dedication to match your needs? Try to pose questions that reveal the candidate's weaknesses as well as strengths.

D. Prepare for a site visit:

Arranging for the candidate and his/her family to visit your practice and community can be one of the most critical and time-consuming aspects of the search process. Many organizations find great success in forming a team of interested community members to help coordinate the site visit. Consider including a representative or two from the local medical community on the team. Here are some things to consider when preparing for the site visit:

- How will the site visit be paid for? Ideally, the organization performing the search should pay for room, board, and possibly even entertainment for the entire family, especially if an offer is ultimately made and accepted. Some communities may have the ability to contribute funds to the process as well.
- Depending on the amenities available in your community, the overnight stay may actually be provided in someone's home or guest house, while entertainment may be a simple gathering at a local restaurant or even a backyard barbecue. Flight costs will be up to your own capabilities, however, a greeting party of some sort should meet your candidate at the airport.
- Prepare an itinerary for the visit and include as many of the following aspects as apply to your situation: