

HealthForceOntario Newsletter

A report to Ontario's healthcare leaders.



Message from Joshua

Welcome to the latest edition of the HealthForceOntario newsletter, reporting on Ontario's Health Human Resources strategy. I would like

to start by recognizing the remarkable accomplishments of the strategy in the first 20 months of our work.

Many of these achievements are outlined in our annual report which is available on our award winning www.HealthForceOntario.ca website. Our success is a reflection of the strong collaboration across the system; from front line providers to senior leadership. Thank you.

In this newsletter, we focus on a critical part of the HealthForceOntario strategy: the activities of the HealthForceOntario Marketing and Recruitment Agency. While the work of this group started in late 2006, it achieved independent agency status in August 2007. The governing board for the agency is now in place and we profile its first members in this edition.

Under the Board's leadership, the Agency operates five branches: Corporate Affairs, the Emergency Department Coverage Demonstration Project, Recruitment and Relocation, the HFO Access Centre and Marketing and Recruitment. All are integral to the overall goal of ensuring that Ontario has the right number and mix of well-educated health care professionals when and where they are needed.

Every year, more internationally educated health professionals choose to make their home in Ontario than in the rest of Canada combined. Historically, these individuals have faced tremendous challenges in understanding the criteria for education and licensure. I have heard too many stories of individuals being shuffled between the education and regulatory systems and government departments—often taking several years at substantial financial and emotional cost to find themselves no closer to working in the health care system than when they began.

Through the HFO Access Centre, internationally educated health professionals are finding out what their opportunities are more quickly and with greater clarity. It is a one-stop shop that takes a case management approach to every individual who comes through its doors. In its first 11 months, the Access Centre has received more than 6,200 visits and is receiving great reviews from clients.

The Marketing and Recruitment branch of the Agency takes an organized and strategic approach to reaching beyond Ontario's borders to recruit practice-ready health professionals. They work closely with municipalities, communities, professional associations, health regulators and recruiters to develop best-practice approaches to outreach activities.

A third branch of the Agency leads the Emergency Department Coverage Demonstration Project. In this initiative, creative thinking and collaboration have resulted in a working model to keep emergency departments open and serving their communities.

As someone who has practised medicine in under-serviced communities and among special needs populations, I am keenly aware that the prospect of recruiting from these communities raises ethical concerns. I share those concerns and am pleased that our activities are carefully governed by a code of ethical conduct that has been approved by medical associations and regulatory groups.

Finally, and as always, I look forward to your support on our collective work and welcome any and all communication.

Joshua Tepper
Assistant Deputy Minister
Health Human Resources
Strategy Division
j.tepper@healthforceontario.ca

HealthForceOntario Marketing and Recruitment Agency



Brad Sinclair

Executive Director
HealthForceOntario
Marketing and
Recruitment Agency

In December 2006, the HealthForceOntario (HFO) Marketing and Recruitment Agency opened to serve health professionals who want to work in Ontario and their potential employers. "We are bringing health care professionals and communities together so that Ontarians have access to care when and where they need it," explains the Agency's Executive Director, Brad Sinclair.

These are some of the ways the HFO Marketing and Recruitment Agency is introducing healthcare professionals to career opportunities in Ontario:

- ◆ Recruiters reach out to repatriate Ontario health professionals educated or employed abroad.

- ◆ Relocation consultants help smooth their transition to a new home and practice environment.
- ◆ Advisors from the Access Centre help internationally educated health professionals in Ontario explore avenues for licensure.
- ◆ HFOJobs.ca showcases Ontario opportunities for nurses and doctors.
- ◆ Staff with the Emergency Department Coverage Demonstration Project match physicians with openings in high-need emergency departments.

A Joint Effort

The HealthForceOntario strategy is designed to ensure that the right number and mix of well-educated healthcare providers are available to meet the needs of Ontarians, now and in the future. The Marketing and Recruitment Agency has a leading role to play in making sure that goal is met. "All the players need to partner collectively and constructively," says Sinclair.

"Working in partnership with the LHINs, we're bringing together groups like the regulatory colleges, professional associations, municipal governments and chambers of commerce to make Ontario the employer of choice for healthcare professionals."

One Province, a World of Opportunity

The Agency's offices are in Toronto, but its work takes staff into towns and cities in every part of Ontario, to the United States and to Europe. HealthForceOntario.ca receives more than 30,000 visits a month and more than 22,000 of those visits are made by people outside of Canada.

"We are fortunate to be able to offer health professionals such a range of exciting and diverse opportunities," says Sinclair. "Not only is Ontario a great place to practice, it's also a wonderful place to live."

Taking Ontario to Kansas City. Left to right: Lynn Bury (Director, Marketing and Recruitment), Ellen Bruce (Recruitment and Relocation Advisor), and Carla Gomez (Marketing Coordinator)



Access Centre for Internationally Educated Health Professionals



Wayne Oake

Director

Access Centre for
Internationally Educated
Health Professionals

Wayne Oake, Director of the Access Centre, comments, "Ontario is one of the fastest growing multi-cultural provinces with a strong need for health care professionals. The Access Centre assists internationally educated health professionals to work in their field in Ontario."

A Growing Clientele

By the end of November 2007, the Access Centre's client base had grown to nearly 2,000 people. Physicians accounted for over 75 per cent of those served. Most were referred to the Access Centre by a community agency or found their own way through the HealthForceOntario website. Most requested counseling



services that would provide them with the necessary information to begin building their career. Many others sought clarification of the regulatory processes that govern their health care discipline. In a survey of clients who visited the Centre in November, 98 per cent rated their appointment as good or excellent.

Who is using the Access Centre?

The Access Centre is focusing its services on internationally educated health professionals in the following regulated health care professions: Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Medical Radiation Technology, Medical Laboratory Technology, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy. The Access Centre also provides general information for all of the regulated health care professions.

"This is the first time a counselor has taken into account ALL my individual needs and assessments."

Access Centre client

Looking Forward: The International Medical Graduate (IMG) Program

Since opening in December of 2006, more than 1,500 IMGs living in Ontario have registered with the Access Centre seeking information and advice about the regulatory process.

In response to feedback from these clients, the Access Centre has developed a program to support IMGs as they move through this complex and highly competitive assessment process.

The program includes information sessions focused on the Medical Council of Canada Examinations, the Centre for Evaluating Health Professionals Educated Abroad (CEHPEA) assessment process, the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMs) application process, interview skills, and examination preparation. The final goal is to help the IMGs receive an invitation to an interview for a residency training position.

The Access Centre launched the program with a CaRMs information session in the fall. The response was overwhelming—more than 150 IMGs attended. In December, more than 120 IMGs came to the Centre for the program's inaugural interview skills session.

"We want internationally-trained physicians to be able to put their best foot forward at every juncture," explains the Centre's Director, Wayne Oake. "That's what the International Medical Graduate program is designed to accomplish."

For more information on the services of the Access Centre for Internationally Educated Health Professionals, including the International Medical Graduate Program, call 1-800-596-4046 or email AccessCentre@healthforceontario.ca



Matching People With Positions



Lynn Bury

**Director, Marketing
and Recruitment**

HealthForceOntario
Marketing and
Recruitment Agency

On the Road with HealthForceOntario

Practise in Ontario. You'll like what you see. You'll love what you do! That's the message being spread by director of marketing and recruitment, Lynn Bury, and her team as they travel nationally and internationally on behalf of the HealthForceOntario Marketing and Recruitment Agency. Bury wants practice-ready health care professionals to know what Ontario has to offer both personally and professionally.

The team strategically targets physicians and physician assistants through a multi-faceted campaign that includes relationship-building and partnerships, conferences, receptions, job fairs and direct mail. As of December 31, the team had made contact with more than 26,000 physicians practicing in the US, the UK and other Canadian provinces. A primary focus is to reach Canadians who are practicing outside of the country.

"When we exhibit, we use an interactive display to showcase Ontario's job opportunities, innovation, diversity, practice flexibility and social progressiveness," Bury explains. "Pre and post-events, we use an integrated customer relationship management approach with health care professionals who are interested in finding out more about relocating to Ontario."

And it's Working

The Agency has recruited 35 physicians and 17 physician assistants and is actively working with another 350 clients who are thinking about coming to practice in Ontario.

When someone gets in touch with the Agency, a file is opened and relocation advisors work closely with the individual

to help them make an informed decision about coming to Ontario. Says Bury, "It's a long-term, individualized approach to recruitment and relocation management."

Bury's team also travels extensively within the province to meet with community recruiters, employers and health care organizations. At these meetings, the Agency staff and local representatives exchange information about their activities and discuss ways they can work together to bring more health professionals to work in Ontario.

The HFO recruitment strategy hinges on "best practices", Bury explains. "We're identifying and sharing the approaches of communities that are excelling at physician recruitment and relocation."

HFOJobs (www.hfojobs.ca)

This portal is our number one tool when it comes to recruiting physicians and nurses to the province. With more than 10,000 posted job opportunities, it is the most comprehensive health care job portal in Ontario. More than 1,500 physicians and 6,500 nurses are registered users and thousands more visit the site each month to search the opportunities posted.

Employers create and manage customized websites on the portal to advertise job opportunities and promote their communities. The HFOJobs support team is on hand to help employers develop their postings or, if they're pressed for time, create the posting on the employer's behalf.

HFOJobs is free for both employers and job-seekers.

For nurses and doctors looking to work in Ontario, the portal answers questions about communities and practice opportunities, allowing job seekers to narrow their searches and effectively find positions that are the best match for their practice and lifestyle preferences.

**www.hfojobs.ca
hfojobs@hfojobs.ca
Toll-free: 1-800-463-1270
Tel. 416-597-3650**

Relocation, Relocation, Relocation: White glove service for incoming professionals

"Any time we've made contact with anybody who has expressed an interest in coming to Ontario, we follow up to find out what their needs are and what their circumstances are, both professionally and personally," says Sue Davey, Director of Recruitment and Relocation.

Some physicians are ready to move to Ontario immediately, while others are weighing their options. "It could be someone in the first year of a three-year residency program just curious and wanting more information. Or it could be someone in Dallas who used to work in Canada and wants to come back to work on weekends. We've made a huge variety of contacts, from students to physicians who've been in practice for years and years." Some retiring Ontario physicians have contacted the Centre for help finding replacements.

Several professional issues must be dealt with before relocating. These include regulatory and certification issues, and education and examination requirements. Once these professional issues have been addressed, Davey's team focuses on finding the practice environment and community that fits the client's lifestyle preferences and addresses family needs.

A relocation services package is being developed with the Ontario Medical Association for physicians looking to move their practice to Ontario.

Agency Leads Staffing of “high-need” Emergency Departments

The Emergency Department Coverage Demonstration Project (EDCDP) provides a locum pool of qualified physicians who are committed to assisting designated, high-need Ontario hospitals cover shifts in their Emergency Departments.

In October 2006, the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) asked the HealthForceOntario Marketing and Recruitment Agency to take the lead in this exciting initiative. The Agency continues to work closely on the project with the OMA, the MOHLTC, the Ontario Hospital Association and the Local Health Integration Networks.

Here’s how it works. Eligible hospitals post the available emergency department shifts on a secure web site. The participating physicians log on and “accept a shift” at the hospital/time they wish to work. The hospital, EDCDP and the physician all receive electronic confirmation. The physicians are paid for the hours they work in the same way as the local, hospital-based physicians, but program physicians receive an additional stipend in exchange for their commitment to be available to cover an average of 20 hours/month of urgent ED shifts without a reduction in service to their home hospitals.

The Agency’s role in the project is wide ranging. In partnership with the OMA, Ministry and the OHA, the agency staff developed and implemented a common credentialing process for hospitals and ED physicians. The Agency is also responsible for recruiting eligible physicians and ensuring they receive monthly payments.

The results of the project are impressive: from its establishment in October 27, 2006 to January 31, 2008, physicians in the program will have provided more than 12,000 hours of coverage to 25 hospitals and none of Ontario’s emergency departments have closed due to staffing shortages.

Other Initiatives Underway

Other emergency department initiatives are also underway. The Agency led the implementation of the 2007 summer shift premium program for 29 hospitals and, with the help of experts, has developed an *Emergency Department Staffing Reference Guide*, a resource that has been distributed to hundreds of stakeholders and providers including hospital executives, associations, community development officers, and the Local Health Integration Networks.

For information on the Emergency Department Coverage Demonstration Project, email emerg@healthforceontario.ca

HealthForceOntario Adopts Ethical Recruitment Statement

HealthForceOntario’s recruiting efforts are guided by an Ethical Recruitment Statement that was developed with the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO).

The HealthForceOntario Ethical Recruitment Statement

- ✓ We will protect the health care systems of developing nations and under-served jurisdictions by avoiding directly marketing to their physicians.
- ✓ We will collaborate with Ontario communities, employers and related organizations to identify and reach shared physician recruitment goals.
- ✓ We will provide all potential recruits with clear, concise and up-to-date information so they can make an informed decision about returning or relocating to Ontario.
- ✓ We will provide detailed information about the positions being recruited for (e.g., compensation, working environment, other relevant conditions, etc.)
- ✓ We will take a comprehensive and facilitative approach to recruitment that recognizes a candidate’s unique and individual life continuum—stretching from personal to the professional.
- ✓ We will provide equal access to information, one-on-one support and links to transitional services to all interested individuals, regardless of whether they were directly recruited.

Success Story: A Perfect Match

HFO Recruiters Find Physician Assistant for Kirkland and District Hospital

For Kirkland and District Hospital, the timing could not have been better. Staffing levels in the emergency department were stretched and the challenge of recruiting healthcare professionals to the hospital was increasing as every day passed.

“The demand for healthcare professionals is so great, and so competitive, that it was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit suitable candidates,” said An Weiler, Clinical Services Leader. “We turned to HealthForceOntario Marketing and Recruitment Agency as a complement to our internal recruiting efforts and the benefits we have realized have been incredible.”

When the province announced the introduction of the Physician Assistant (PA) role, Weiler knew it would be the perfect opportunity to integrate these professionals into Kirkland and District Hospital’s existing team. “We were successful in our submission to HealthForceOntario for a PA in our emergency department and received applications from a broad range of candidates – the process was seamless,” said Weiler.

As a PA trained by the Canadian military, Kelly Helmink has seen his share of emergencies. His experience in the military as a PA has led to opportunities that have provided him with the skills and education to work in many scenarios and situations as diverse as providing medical services in war torn Sudan under harsh conditions with very little infrastructure. After the years spent with the Canadian Forces, Kelly used his medical training and in-field experience to secure

Reduction of wait times and patient satisfaction are among the immediate benefits.

employment in the civilian sector. When he saw the opportunity to work as a PA at Kirkland and District Hospital, he knew it would be a natural transition and an opportunity to put his skills and experience to work in a part of Ontario that he loved.

Kelly has been working in the emergency department at Kirkland and District Hospital since September 2007. “There were initial concerns from some staff about the introduction of a PA to the team,” said Weiler, “but those were certainly short lived. When Kelly arrived and began working with the other healthcare professionals, the teamwork was inspiring and the benefits were immediate.”

For Kelly, working as a PA has been just as challenging as his field work with the military. “Although the conditions are similar, the patients are very diverse, from working with the elderly to small children, the challenge has been one that I’m really enjoying and the support I receive here is amazing. The new faces, the new environment, and the diversity of the work really make it a joy to come to work every day.”

The successful integration of a PA into the healthcare team at Kirkland and District Hospital has shown immediate results for both the public and the hospital. “Kelly is an asset to the hospital, patients love him, the staff work extremely well with him, and because of the success of the entire process we are now securing our second PA from Boise, Idaho, something we never would have been able to do without the tools and resources available from HealthForceOntario,” said Weiler. “HFO has made it possible for us to expand our recruitment capabilities and the end result is better service for our patients.”



Dr. Mark Spiller is the Chief of Staff and Chief of ER at Kirkland and District Hospital, as well as Kelly's supervising physician. Since

Kelly has been added to the Kirkland and District Healthcare Team, Dr. Spiller has noticed:

- ♦ **Decreased** patient wait times.
- ♦ **Decreased** workloads for physicians and nurses.
- ♦ **Improved** work environment and work/life balance.

Agency Staff Supports Candidate Every Step of the Way

When Kelly Helmink sent an expression of interest to PA@healthforceontario.ca, the HFO Marketing and Recruitment Agency immediately responded with a package that included practice and community profiles of the demonstration sites, a map of Ontario and an expression of interest form.

While working as a physician assistant in BC, Kelly enjoyed hiking, fishing and snow sports and he wanted to live somewhere where he could continue those pursuits. He reviewed the profiles and chose Kirkland Lake. The hospital looked at Kelly's resume and invited him to Kirkland Lake for an interview. Both parties were pleased and a letter of offer soon followed.

In fact, from the time Kelly contacted the Agency in early July until he started work at the hospital on September 3, Thea Watson, Marketing Coordinator, was in weekly contact with Kelly. "Our goal is to make Physician Assistants feel welcome in Ontario and excited about the job they're taking on," Thea explains. "They are truly trailblazers in Ontario."

Even after Kelly's contract was signed, the HFO Marketing and Recruitment Agency team worked closely with the local community development officer and recruiter to make sure that he got help sorting out matters like housing and banking. It's a service the agency provides to every new recruit. "Everyone works together to make sure the transition is a smooth one for the Physician Assistants" Thea says. "Support from the communities has been fabulous."

For information about recruitment and relocation services call 1-800-596-4046 or email info@healthforceontario.ca



HealthForceOntario Marketing and Recruitment Agency Board Appointed

In September 2007, these three health care leaders were appointed to the HFO Marketing and Recruitment Agency Board of Directors...

Amit Chakma, PhD



"Ontario's communities are crying out for better access to quality health care. Our Board is committed to collaborating with Ontario's health care

stakeholders—including government, health care organizations and educational institutions—to identify barriers and recommend policy changes that will make Ontario the employer-of-choice for health care professionals."

Dr. Amit Chakma, Chair of Board, has been Vice-President (Academic) and Provost at the University of Waterloo since 2001. Prior to this, Dr. Chakma was Vice-President (Research) and Dean of Engineering at University of Regina and Associate Professor at the University of Calgary. He holds a PhD from the University of British Columbia and is a member of the Canadian Society of Chemical Engineering and the Canadian Chemical Institute. Dr. Chakma serves on the Boards of Canada's Technology Triangle: Communtech, Waterloo North Hydro and St. Mary's Hospital.

Joan Lesmond RN, BScN, MSN, Ed.D.(c)



"Immigrating to Ontario some thirty years ago, I experienced first hand the challenges of meeting the education and examination

requirements to become practice-ready. As a member of the Board, I look forward to imparting my experiences and perspectives as we strive to meet Ontario's need for health care professionals."

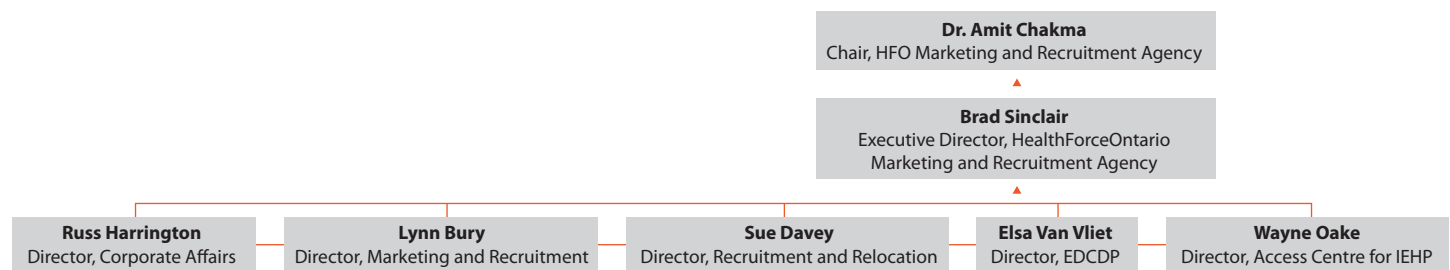
Ms. Joan Lesmond is the Immediate Past President of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) and Past President of the International Nurses Interest Group of the RNAO. Ms. Lesmond is currently Executive Director, Community Engagement of Saint Elizabeth Health Care and President of the Regent Park Community Health Centre. She holds a Master's of Science in Community Health Nursing from D'Youville College in Buffalo, a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing from Ryerson Polytechnic University and is currently enrolled in a Doctoral program in Health Policy and Health Education at D'Youville College.

Peter Wells, MD, CCFP, FCFP



"Our role is less about putting out local fires, but rather, overcoming the issues that are at the root of the problem and identifying creative solutions."

Dr. Peter Wells is a Family Physician in Collingwood, Ontario, and the founding Executive Director of the Rural Ontario Medical Program. Currently, Dr. Wells is an Assistant Clinical Professor at McMaster University and Assistant Professor for the University of Toronto. Dr. Wells' demonstrates his commitment to International Medical Graduates entering Ontario by serving as an examiner for the Centre for the Evaluation of Health Professionals Educated Abroad.



HealthForceOntario

c/o Health Human Resources Strategy Division
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
80 Grosvenor Street, 8th Floor, Hepburn Block
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1R3

email: healthforceontario@moh.gov.on.ca
website: www.healthforceontario.ca

