

## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Warden and Members of Shelburne Municipal Council  
**FROM:** Val Kean, Community Development Coordinator  
**APPROVED BY:** Trudy Payne, Chief Administrative Officer  
**DATE:** May 25, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** **Community Navigator Report**

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### PURPOSE

To promote discussion surrounding the activities involved in the newly developed Community Navigator position.

### BACKGROUND

During Municipal budget discussions it was determined that the addition of Community Navigation duties to the Community Development Coordinator position would add value to the Municipality's involvement in welcoming new and visiting healthcare professionals to the Shelburne and Roseway Hospital.

In April 2021, the Community Development Coordinator began executing the duties of a Community Navigator as a part-time commitment to the existing role.

### DISCUSSION

**Navigator Role** – Some of the things navigators are responsible for include liaising with stakeholders, assisting with housing and accommodations, spousal employment, social and religious groups and childcare. They also support medical staff like primary care providers and other allied health professionals, residents and students through events and activities, support customized site visits (virtual and in-person) and help to answer the many questions related to setting up life and practice in Rural Nova Scotia.

Essentially navigator positions across the province assist with addressing and working through any barriers to physician's and their family's while integrating into local communities. In May 2021, before the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, staff were scheduled to co-operatively participate in Doctor's Day and Rural Week activities.

**Current Physician Status** – Roseway Hospital currently has three Emergency Room (ER) physician vacancies and one ER (only) physician starting a rotation between Shelburne, Yarmouth and Digby ERs this month with percentage of time spent working at each Hospital will depend on the need and shift availability.

Four physicians are currently practicing in Shelburne. One will be leaving in July 2021 and one joining in Fall 2021. Physicians working in Shelburne are currently working under the following capacity:

- Physician 1 (arriving in Fall 2021) – Inpatient and Primary Care Clinic
- Physician 2 (leaving in July 2021) – Emergency Room and Primary Care Clinic
- Physician 3 – In patient only
- Physician 4 – Inpatient and Family
- Physician 5 – Family and Primary Care Clinic

Staff are currently assisting with securing rental accommodations for two physicians (long-term, furnished, central) and one nurse (long-term).

**Potential Funding Sources** – Sources of funding for Navigator positions and related hospitality activities come from several sources – one being Municipal units. Other sources of funding include:

- Doctors Nova Scotia
- Department of Health & Wellness
- Department of Culture and Innovation
- Chamber of Commerce
- Private Donors
- Hospital Foundations

More research is needed to determine availability and eligibility of funding. Staff will continue to compile the list, with additional detail in the coming weeks.

**Organizations Involved** – There are several organizations involved in physician recruitment.

Doctors Nova Scotia work to connect and engage physicians as well as advocate on behalf of physicians once interested in employment.

Department of Health & Wellness supports programs and services that protect and promote health in Nova Scotia while providing leadership to the healthcare system. Department of Health & Wellness will sometime administer employment incentives to Nova Scotia Health Authority for physician recruitment purposes.

Nova Scotia Health Authority provides health services to Nova Scotians by operating hospitals, health centers and community-based programs across the province. Nova Scotia Health Authority employs Physician Recruitment Consultants that work in

partnership with universities, governments, foundations and auxiliaries and community health boards – including Doctors NS - to fill vacancies. Health services are organized across four areas:

- Annapolis Valley, South Shore and South West Nova Scotia
- Cape Breton, Guysborough and Antigonish areas
- Colchester-East Hants, Cumberland and Pictou areas
- Halifax, Eastern Shore and West Hants

A Community Navigators Group made up of Community Navigators from across the Province meet monthly to informally discuss individual and regional matters related to navigator responsibilities. Occasionally professional development workshops and presentations will be scheduled within this group.

**Community Resources Concerns** – Physicians choose to practice in rural NS for a variety of reasons including but not limited to comparable low-cost of living, achievable work-life balance, short commute times and active transportation options etc. Although Shelburne provides a competitive market for healthcare professionals, made even more competitive by the access of rural high-speed internet, staff have identified urgent housing and childcare needs in communities across the County which, presents immediate obstacles to not only the retention and recruitment of healthcare professionals but as well, young families and business and community development innovations.