
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

B.C. ATTRACTS MORE DOCTORS

VICTORIA – B.C. attracted more doctors from within Canada and from abroad than any other province last year. According to a report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), 113 physicians moved to B.C. from other provinces in 2005.

B.C. also had a net increase of 35 doctors from other countries – more than any other province.

“British Columbia was one of the only two jurisdictions that enjoyed a positive in-migration of physicians from other provinces,” said Health Minister George Abbott. “The overwhelming popularity of B.C. reflects the favourable atmosphere we are developing for physicians as we move our health system into the future.”

The recent agreement with the BC Medical Association, which ensures that B.C. residents continue to receive high quality, timely and appropriate health-care services, is part of that welcoming environment. The agreement includes \$136 million over the next four years to support and encourage access to full-service family doctors.

Beyond the BCMA agreement, the Province is making improvements in other areas that will support doctors pursuing family practice, including:

- An expansion in the number of residencies for international medical graduates from six to 18 – 12 of which are for family medicine.
- Enhanced recruitment and retention initiatives for rural B.C. through incentives to doctors and programs like Health Match B.C., a comprehensive, no-fee, health-care recruitment service for British Columbia.

Other initiatives to increase the number of doctors include:

- Increasing the number of undergraduate medical school spaces at UBC from 128 to 224 through academic partners at UVic and UNBC. More doctors will now be educated and trained in B.C., improving the availability of – and access to – GPs and specialists for B.C. residents.
- The Province is also planning a fourth medical program at UBC Okanagan to improve access to health care across the southern Interior. When these undergraduate expansions are complete, the Province expects to graduate 288 MDs every year, up from 128 in 2001-02.
- Increasing the number of entry level post graduate residencies from 128 in 2002/03 to 256 in 2010-11.

“The influx in doctors from other provinces and a net increase from other countries shows that B.C is actually enjoying a brain gain,” said Abbott. “The CIHI report is a great endorsement of our efforts to attract health professionals to B.C.”

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