

ED and UCC: Physician Recruitment and Retention

Updated: June 11, 2025

Niagara Health has a robust and comprehensive physician recruitment plan. The following highlights recruitment activities specific to ED and UCC physicians.

Strategies

1. **Needs Assessment and Workforce Planning:** working with Physician Leaders to capture current state and support current and future planning (e.g. the need for job shares, allowing flexible work agreements to support work-life balance for physicians and emergency medicine conferences.)
2. **Physician-focused Recruitment:** Targeting physician-focused job boards (e.g. HealthForceOntario)
3. **Medical Learner Engagement/"Grow your Own":** Partnership with McMaster and creating positive learner experiences with the goal of having those learners return to NH post-graduation
4. **Incentives:** Relocation support for those moving into the region and support for work permits for qualified candidates
5. **Dedicated Emergency Physician to do direct networking and recruitment**
 - a. Engaging possible recruits and integrating them into teams/building relationships
 - b. Site visits and networking with recruits
 - c. Onboarding and peer support
6. **Retention of current team members**
 - a. Physician Peer Recognition program
 - b. Materials to support community integration
 - c. Joint Implementation Working Group: Engaging physicians and supporting fair, equitable processes
 - d. Recognition of our team members with events like Doctor's Day
 - e. Investments in wellness, engagement, and workplace culture
 - f. Updates to how we communicate with physicians: The Scan with Dr. Chan
 - g. Continuing Medical Education: Coordinator, Medical Education ongoing work and support for ED Department Meetings and Education

An ED Mentorship Program for Family Physicians has been supported by the Ministry of Health to provide ED funding to facilitate the onboarding of family physicians who have not previously practiced in an ED or UCC setting. This program offers approximately 8 weeks of funding, contingent on a minimum commitment of 32 hours per month. During this period physicians are compensated at the standard departmental rate and work alongside ED physicians (mentors) during buddy shifts, actively participating in patient care within the ED. Upon completion of the program, the expectation is that these physicians will transition to working independently in the ED.

Since June 2022 we have onboarded 3 physicians through the mentorship program. Two continue to work in our ED, the third is no longer practicing in ED or UCC.

Recruitment Resources: Medical Affairs

- Four Medical Affairs staff support development of job descriptions, job postings, advertising, coordinating the impact analysis process and facilitating interviews. They also update the physician health human resources plan and providing resources for supporting relocation and work permits
- Physician ED Recruitment Coordinator, who is an Emergency Medicine Physicians, supports the following:
 - Facilitate the physician workforce strategy for the Emergency Medicine Department in collaboration with the Chief and Heads of Service at all NH sites.



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- Analyzing Emergency Medicine Department recruitment needs, developing measurable recruitment targets, executing plans and ultimately developing a long-term sustainable recruitment strategy for the Department.
- Act as the main contact for potential recruits, maintain current and active lists of potential recruits, ensure timely follow-up with candidates, and connect qualified candidates with the appropriate Chief or Head of Service.

Recruitment Results:

Number of ED docs hired

From Dec 2023 to May 2025 we have credentialed **12 physicians** in ED:

- 4 Active/Associate physicians
- 2 Courtesy physicians
- 6 Locum physicians

There is currently ED credentialing in progress for **4 physicians** with the plan to present to the Credentialing Committee in August, pending physician submitting all required documentation:

- 2 Active/Associate physicians
- 2 Locum physicians

Recruitment Activities:

In Progress

- Niagara Health Physician Careers Page: [Physicians | Niagara Health](#)
- LinkedIn posts
 - Physician Recruitment posts
 - Doctor's Day and Join our Team
 - [LinkedIn posts](#)
- HFO postings – there are 9 active job postings for emergency medicine physicians (3 - WS, 4 - SCS, 2 - NFS)
- Drs. Heywood and Setrak have attended recruitment events and conferences in Emergency Medicine to promote Niagara Health as an employer of choice and the field of emergency medicine
- Partner with Jill Croteau, Manager, Physician Recruitment Program, Niagara Region through physician recruitment activities
- Physician Recruitment Campaign – launched in May, 2025 with a focus on Canadian and US physician candidates: [Link to Physician Recruitment campaign](#)
- Partnership with McMaster School of Medicine/Niagara Regional Campus through Dr. Amanda Bell, Regional Assistant Dean, Niagara Regional Campus, to engage medical learners in emergency medicine. There are two emergency medicine residents spot per year. We have had high retention outcomes and are currently hiring the 2 residents.

Planned

Through the leadership of Dr. Chan, our physician recruitment strategy is expanding to further enhance engagement with US candidates, increase engagement with medical schools, grow our commitment to the future physician talent



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pipeline through medical learner education and engagement, and further develop physician led peer recruitment. Beyond Emergency Medicine, there is additional focus on Internal Medicine and Mental Health.



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