The Missing Piece of the Puzzle: Is Your Community Part of your Physician Recruitment Solution?

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Presented by:
Douglas Johnson, MD
James Koberstein, MD
Sheila Hart, MHA, FACHE
Problem

Declining number of physicians in rural care and physicians choosing rural care

- The Health Resources and Services Administration indicate that at least 7,000 more physicians are needed in underserved areas such as rural or inner-city communities.
Good News

We have a very good physician to population ratio in Minnesota

• AAMC 2007 – Minnesota ranked 14th
Bad News

Minnesota has enough physicians but the distribution does not favor rural areas

States with Above Average Resident to Physician Ratio
Problem

Primarily a distribution problem, not likely to go away on its own

Contributing trends to the problem:

– Aging population
– Impact of gender issues
– Specialization
What To Do?

• Traditional recruitment methods:
  • Post Ads (print and online)
  • Mailings
  • Job Fairs
  • Residency Visits
Time to Think Outside the Box
Strategies

• Build Your Own Pipeline

• Engage the entire COMMUNITY and all of your staff in your recruitment efforts
Strategy: Build Your Own Pipeline

Long-term investment

• Approximately 40% of Duluth Clinic physicians had a previous experience with SMDC

• Over 50 Duluth Clinic physicians attended U of MN – Duluth Medical School
Summer Internship in Medicine (SIM)

- 2 - 8 week experience following completion of first year of medical school
- Goal: expose students to rural areas
- SIM allows students to interact with physicians in our system. Builds relationships which can translate into hires.
Rural Physician Associate Program (RPAP)

• Nine month experience through U of MN at an approved rural site during 3rd year of medical school.
• 2 out of 3 students end up practicing in MN, 2 out of 3 in rural locations
• 78% end up practicing primary care
• 23 Duluth Clinic physicians participated in RPAP
3rd and 4th Year Clerkships

- Clerkships during 3rd & 4th year of medical school
- Opportunity to interact with physicians in various specialties, build relationships
- Recently hired two 4th year medical students (Ashland)
Residency Rotations

• Rotations through Duluth Family Medicine Residency Program
• Rotations from other programs
• Opportunity to have an onsite experience – what would it be like to work here?
Rural Hospitals – Obstetric Services Problem

• Number of Medical Students entering Primary Care (FM, GIM, Peds) is declining

• Not all Family Medicine residency programs provide adequate Obstetric training
Rural Hospitals – Obstetric Services Problem:

• Some FM graduates:
  – choose to not provide Ob services
  – provide Ob, but then quit
  – would like to do Ob but lack C/S backup

• Retirement of FM Physicians
Obstetric Fellowships for FM Physicians

• In 2007, 30 programs in United States
• Midwest:
  – Oak Park, IL
  – South Bend, IN
  – Kansas City, MO
  – Cleveland, OH
  – Grand Forks, ND
We Created Our Own Solution: DC Obstetric/Procedural Medicine Fellowship

- SMDC offers a 1-year fellowship in OB/procedural medicine (started July 2008)
- Program Director: Dr. Jim Koberstein
- 1 to 2 fellows per year
- Designed for family medicine physicians immediately following a 3-year family medicine residency
Solution:

• Curriculum: Obstetrics & C/S, Emergency Medicine & Trauma, medical procedures, and electives

• Fellows will practice in a DC outpatient clinic to maintain primary care skills and generate revenue to reduce cost of the fellowship
Solution:

- Program will be coordinated with Duluth Family Medicine Residency program
- Not certified by ACGME or ABMS
- Benefits: Same as 1st year DC Physician
Goal Statement:

To produce family medicine physicians who will practice in rural areas and perform Obstetrics and Cesarean Sections, assess and manage Trauma and Emergency cases, and perform common medical procedures.

*Hopefully these physicians will practice in rural Minnesota.*
Pipeline in Place

- 1st fellow completes program June 30, 2009
- Practicing in Ely
- 2nd fellow begins July 2009
“Had a great experience and would do it over again. Just did my first c-section in Ely and was amazed at how well it went and how well-trained and prepared the fellowship made me! It was a relief knowing I could do it on my own, but I would not have felt this way if I had not done the fellowship.”
Another Important Strategy:

Engage the entire COMMUNITY and all of your staff in your recruitment efforts
Duluth Clinic International Falls
Case Study: International Falls

Situation Analysis:
Loss of multiple family medicine physicians in a short span of time due to retirement, death of two physicians, career transition to teaching

• OB call had become 1:4
Situation Analysis (continued):

• DC I Falls had been recruiting FM physicians for over a year. Traditional methods had shown limited success.

• The ongoing shortage was creating significant patient access issues, low morale and physician burn-out.

• House of cards….Lose one more family medicine physician and clinic could be in danger of closing…add one? Physician daily life markedly improves.
Solution

• Create a Recruitment Strategy Unique to International Falls

• Engage the entire community and staff in physician recruitment and retention efforts.
Community Ideation Sessions

• Create awareness among key community leaders about the need to recruit physicians/practitioners.

• Gain commitment & establish a spirit of collective responsibility for recruitment and retention.

• Gather ideas from committed stakeholders, develop specific action plans and assign responsibilities.
Community Ideation Session

• Focused around three-part challenge:
  – What to say
  – How to say it
  – How to find doctors to listen to the message
Strategies for the Community

• Networking
  – Utilize local website www.yourtickerhome.biz to network with former area residents
  – Draft letter for community leaders to send to prospective candidates
  – Partner with real estate agents and local resorts, providing information to share with potential recruits
  – Take advantage of “All Class” school reunion, tie to recruitment website
Community Strategies…

• Partner with Chamber
  – Relocation Packets
  – Welcome Baskets
  – Articles about need for physicians in Chamber Newsletter

• Advertising
  – Recruitment brochures in local businesses
  – Large Recruitment Poster at the International Falls airport
  – In recreational publications (e.g. fishing, hiking)
  – Web optimization (e.g. Rainy Lake Houseboats)
  – Develop slogans that leverage the “negatives”
No.021907

Duluth Clinic International Falls Doctor Recruitment Raffle

Congratulations you have won a three day Rainy Lake Houseboat trip on beautiful Rainy Lake and Voyageurs National Park.

Your trip is not redeemable for cash or transferable. Your houseboat is fully equipped ready for your visit to Rainy Lake. The winner is responsible for all cash purchases such as fuel, food, hull insurance or other incidentals.

You may call and make your reservation for the 2007 season. Our dates of operation are May 10, 2007 through October 10, 2007.

Your houseboat is a Voyageur model houseboat that is 50 feet long and sleeps six comfortably. You may upgrade to a larger houseboat or lengthen your trip for the cost differential between models or length of your stay.

Looking forward to seeing you in International Falls!

The Dougherty Family

Rainy Lake Houseboats
Slogans

- Looking for doctors who aren’t afraid to use leeches
- Docs looking for docks
- Practice where you play
- A practice with a 212,000 acre break room
- It’s too cold for the rat race
Practice where you play

We’re seeking physicians and practitioners.
You’re seeking a more relaxed lifestyle.
This could be a perfect fit.
International Falls is a friendly city with an amazing quality of life and abundant year-round recreational opportunities in a beautiful setting. Most of all, it’s a place where your life and your career are in harmony. Here, you’ll discover:
Practice where you play
• World-class fishing and boating on Rainy Lake, a 212,000-acre walleye, northern and bass lake with 1,600 islands.
• Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota’s only national park featuring four seasons of fun including snowmobiling, skiing, boating, canoeing and kayaking.
• Incredible hunting and wildlife watching.
• A safe, family friendly community with very low crime rates.
• Top-notch private and public education, with a myriad of extracurricular activities for students.
• Challenging and rewarding work at the Duluth Clinic-International Falls, part of the nationally recognized SMDC Health System.
• Easy driving distance to Duluth, Minneapolis/St. Paul and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.
Don’t let this opportunity pass you by. Learn more!
Contact Sheila Hart, Administrator or Doug Johnson, MD, at 218-283-9431
www.duluthclinic.org/career
HE’S HOOKED!

Dr. Jesse Heuer has signed our contract!

Great teamwork everyone! Sheila

Start Date: July 25, 2009
Other Recruitment Strategies:

• Identify a target audience

• Utilize current physicians in the recruitment process via
  - Telephone conversations with candidate
  - Assisting recruiter at conferences
  - Hosting recruitment dinner party
  - Giving candidate tour of the community
Last, but not least…

Write a song 🎵

(or have someone famous write one for you!)

International Falls has its very own physician recruitment song, written by Garrison Keillor and aired on a “Prairie Home Companion.” (See handout)

- Idea sent in creative “presentation box” that included dry ice and choppers.
- National promotion that was low in cost, high in creativity
- Importance of thinking “outside the box” for multi-media exposure
Never Stop Recruiting…
...Do you know any doctors who aren’t afraid to use leeches?
SMDC Vision

“Working together with our patients and communities, we are creating the next generation of integrated health care.”

Long Term Strategy

Our future is to partner with communities to create a sustainable and high quality health system for our rural areas. We can’t do it alone – we need engaged communities.
Contributors

Amy Arntson
Physician & Practitioner Recruiter

Leslie Hanson
Mgr, Physician & Practitioner Employment

Jocelyn Heid
Mgr, Physician & Practitioner Recruitment