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News Release

“Physician Recruitment to Meadow Lake Continues”

Prairie North Health Region continues its retention and recruitment efforts for physicians and nurse practitioners for Meadow Lake and area.

“We have been successful in recruiting an additional physician to Meadow Lake,” says Glennys Uzelman, Vice President of Primary Health Services. “Dr. Andrey Babkis is on track to be in Meadow Lake mid-July.” In recent months, two physicians have left Meadow Lake. Dr. Cambridge was unable to meet criteria required to obtain licensure and Dr. Samuels has left for personal reasons. While the departures of Dr. Cambridge and Dr. Samuels are regrettable, the Region continues its recruitment efforts.

Ten physicians are currently providing care and services to patients in Meadow Lake however five of these physicians only work part-time. One nurse practitioner provides part time service to Meadow Lake. A full complement of health care professionals in Meadow Lake would consist of 10 full time physicians and 3 full time nurse practitioners.

“We are struggling in Meadow Lake and area with what most health regions across the province are struggling with in terms of physician and nurse practitioner retention and recruitment to smaller centres,” says Uzelman. “We recognize the difficulties and the challenges that these communities face in accessing timely health care services as we continue our recruitment efforts.”

Prairie North works in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Physician Recruitment Agency to recruit physicians to the province and specifically PNHR. Physician recruitment and retention efforts will be further enhanced in the Region by the addition of a Medical Administration Coordinator. The Medical Administration Coordinator will act as a liaison between the Region and potential recruits, serving to foster further physician engagement and interest in our Region. To date this work has been supported by a variety of individuals within the Region.

Nurse practitioners have been difficult to recruit, although the Region continues to put much effort into recruitment initiatives such as education and career fairs. PNHR has also developed the “Grow Your Own” strategy which focuses on encouraging registered nurses already employed with the Region to take advanced nurse practitioner education and training. The Region assists in this education and training through incentive programs, flexible work schedules and bursaries.

One of the incentives PNHR will use to attract medical professionals to Meadow Lake will be the newly re-designed office space at the Meadow Lake Associate Clinic. The renovation plans, which have been designed with input from physicians and staff and with patient flow in mind, will provide additional space for visiting medical professionals, such as a Chronic Disease Nurse Educator. Renovations on the office space will be completed this summer.

Prairie North Health Region's vision for Primary Health Care Services in Meadow Lake is to have teams of health care professionals and community members working together to improve health care services.

"We are trying to strengthen the services available to Meadow Lake and area by ensuring all health care professionals work together to support patient and client needs and by providing a mixed complement of services, such as group appointments," explains Uzelman. "By bringing together a group of patients with similar health concerns, such as diabetes, we can maximize their time with the physician and nurse educator while providing them with a safe and supportive space to ask questions, voice concerns and learn from other patients who are dealing with the same health concerns."

PNHR continues to work with community leaders to recruit physicians and nurse practitioners to Meadow Lake and area and will continue to keep the community informed of its progress.

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