

From: [Culbert, Lori](#)
To: [Sorochan, Craig GCPE:EX](#)
Cc: [May, Stephen GCPE:EX](#); [Thomson, Krystal GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: Re: foreign-trained doctors
Date: August 11, 2021 11:54:31 PM
Attachments: [1BF9CB5D-8111-4563-AEC4-4EAC0F7F26F8\[31\].png](#)

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Thank you.

Lori Culbert

Reporter

Vancouver Sun | The Province

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<!--[if !vml]--> <!--[endif]-->

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From: "Sorochan, Craig GCPE:EX" <Craig.Sorochan@gov.bc.ca>
Date: Wednesday, August 11, 2021 at 5:55 PM
To: Postmedia Inc <lculbert@postmedia.com>
Cc: Stephen May <Stephen.May@gov.bc.ca>, "Thomson, Krystal GCPE:EX" <Krystal.Thomson@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: foreign-trained doctors

Hi,

We were able to get a response for you today.

Please see this information attributable to the Ministry of Health:

Every British Columbian deserves to have access to primary care services. That's why in 2018, the Government launched a transformational team-based primary care strategy, envisioned to increase

patient attachment and access to quality, comprehensive, culturally safe, and person-centred primary care services for people across B.C.

Province-wide, we have been working to improve primary care in the province. This includes:

- Increasing spaces in the UBC family medicine resident training, the largest training program in Canada.
- In 2020/21, 373 UBC family medicine residents were training/providing care across years 1 and 2.
- Creating 53 Primary Care Networks with another 18 in planning.
- Creating 24 Urgent and Primary Care Centres with an additional six in planning
- Three new Community Health Centres with three additional in planning
- One First Nations led primary care clinic with fourteen more in planning
- Three new nurse practitioner led primary care clinics

Over the next four years, across the four networks, up to 96.5 more full-time health-care providers will be recruited. This includes family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, clinical pharmacists, Indigenous health providers and allied health professionals, such as social workers and mental health clinicians.

We recognize that any major change like this will take time, and there will be challenges along the way. Like many jurisdictions, B.C. is challenged by the health-care practitioner shortages across Canada, including primary care providers. But our government's goal is to improve access to primary care – and these strategies will help improve that. We continue recruitment efforts to add to our primary care provider teams and increase capacity.

We also recognize the importance of International Medical Graduates (IMGs), they have been welcomed to BC for decades and are recognized as crucial contributing physician members of the BC workforce, often providing important physician services to British Columbians who live in the most rural and remote communities.

IMGs are a diverse group from medical schools around the world. Every person's unique story reflects a broad range of experience, from years of practice to no patient experience at all. As such, BC has supported and implemented ways to reduce barriers over recent years, such as the unprecedented expansion of the UBC medical program.

We have doubled the number of entry level residency positions from 134 to 346, including an expansion to the number of IMG residency seats from 6 in 2003 to 58 currently (52 Family Medicine, which we know from our discussions is what people in B.C. are most calling for and 6 Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada specialties).

In addition, the Province has also implemented a practice ready assessment program (PRA-BC) for IMGs who have completed residencies in family medicine outside of Canada.

The program will provide qualified family physicians with a pathway to licensure in BC in exchange

for a practice commitment in a health authority-identified community. Residents in Family Medicine complete a two-year return of service, other specialties complete a three-year return of service. The PRA-BC curriculum includes a two-week centralized orientation before undergoing a 12-week Clinical Field Assessment (CFA) under the supervision of a fully licensed family physician in a BC community.

In 2020, The College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC drafted new bylaws to introduce a restricted “associate physician (AP)” class of registration for practitioners who are not eligible for a full or provisional license. Once fully established, this pathway will allow individuals with some medical training to work under physician supervision in acute care settings to increase capacity and service delivery.

As medical education varies widely among IMGs, prior to gaining access to residency in Canada, all IMGs must complete a series of standardized assessments to ensure they meet the minimum Canadian medical education standards and have the required skills to start residency training.

Background information

In 2019/20, the Ministry counted 12,695 physicians under all Ministry payment sources.

The ratio of physicians to population was 250 per 100,000 British Columbians in 2019 – higher than the national average of 241 per 100,000.

The number of family doctors in B.C. is also increasing.

Family Physicians in British Columbia

FISCAL	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Family Physicians	6,218	6,369	6,501	6,641

*(** We don't have 2020/2021 Alternative Payment Program data yet, so we could only update the fee-for-service figures for 2020/2021, which would likely miss ~300 docs.)*

To learn more about the Province's Primary Health-care Strategy, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018PREM0034-001010>

To learn more about the Province's strategy to recruit and retain more family medicine graduates, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018HLTH0052-001043>

Please cite the Ministry of Health.

Thanks,

Craig Sorochan
Communications Manager
Ministry of Health
Government Communications and Public Engagement
250-208-9130

From: Culbert, Lori <LCulbert@postmedia.com>
Sent: August 11, 2021 3:30 PM
To: Sorochan, Craig GCPE:EX <Craig.Sorochan@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: foreign-trained doctors

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I have to file the story tomorrow. So if the answers could land mid-day that would be appreciated.

Thanks
Lori

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 11, 2021, at 3:26 PM, Sorochan, Craig GCPE:EX
<Craig.Sorochan@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi Lori,

We are still working on this request. Is it okay if we get back to you tomorrow on these questions?

Call if needed: 250-208-9130.

Thanks,

Craig Sorochan
Communications Manager
Ministry of Health
Government Communications and Public Engagement
250-208-9130

From: May, Stephen GCPE:EX <Stephen.May@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: August 10, 2021 1:12 PM
To: Culbert, Lori <LCulbert@postmedia.com>; Thomson, Krystal GCPE:EX

<Krystal.Thomson@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Sorochan, Craig GCPE:EX <Craig.Sorochan@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: foreign-trained doctors

Hi Lori,

We will look into this for you.

From: Culbert, Lori <LCulbert@postmedia.com>

Sent: August 10, 2021 1:11 PM

To: Thomson, Krystal GCPE:EX <Krystal.Thomson@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: May, Stephen GCPE:EX <Stephen.May@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: foreign-trained doctors

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hi Krystal and Stephen,

I'm writing a story about the [Equal Chance](#) campaign which wants more equity for foreign-trained doctors to be able to practice in Canada. Can you please answer the questions below. My deadline is end of day Wednesday.

Thank you.

The organization says foreign-trained doctors can apply to just 17% of residency positions in BC (for a total of 58 spots), while the rest of the positions are preserved for new doctors trained in Canada and the U.S. Why is that the case and is there any plan to change this given the doctor shortage in BC?

Can you confirm that about 1,000 international medical graduates apply each year for one of those 58 spots in BC?

The organization says domestically trained doctors can apply for residencies in 29 disciplines, while foreign trained can only apply for residencies in four disciplines. The bulk of those positions for foreign trained doctors (52/58) are for family medicine, and the remaining six spots are across three disciplines: psychiatry, pediatrics and internal medicine. Why is there such a short list of disciplines available for foreign trained doctors, and why are most of these spots in family medicine?

Can you provide an update on the shortage of doctors in BC? How many physicians are needed right now to fill gaps? Are there certain communities (ie, rural, Indigenous) with the largest shortages? Are there certain specialities that are particularly short of doctors and, if so, which ones? Do you have future projections for doctor shortages given the number of doctors near retirement?

Is there a plan to address the doctor shortage in BC?

During the pandemic, did BC provide temporary licences to some foreign-trained doctors to help out with COVID-related needs in the health care system? If so, how many were issued and are they now expired? Is there any plan to try to use these foreign trained doctors again in the future?

Many thanks,

Lori.

C: 604.816.4059

Lori Culbert

Reporter

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