

# The time is ripe? Doctors Manitoba campaigning to lure U.S. docs to Canada where they can ‘practice with stability and certainty’



Political tension among Americans could offer an opportunity to recruit.

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Last November, around the U.S. presidential election, [Google](#) saw a spike in searches for “moving to Canada” while the [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#) web site saw 295,000 unique visitors from the U.S., while it often averages just 36,000, according to a [newspaper report](#).

Healthcare groups in provinces like Manitoba are looking at whether the American political shifts will lead doctors to do more than just surf the web, but seriously consider a relocation.

Since November, Doctors Manitoba—which as the province’s medical association, does not normally tackle recruitment—has been advertising in the U.S. and has a [page on its web site](#) to offer doctors information about working there. The site states that doctors in Manitoba can “practice with

stability and certainty, where you are valued and trusted as a physician and the government stays out of the exam room.”

The province welcomes between one and three doctors a year from the U.S. “It's very much an untapped market for Manitoba,” says Doctors Manitoba spokesperson Keir Johnson. “We're concerned that we might be losing potential recruits to other provinces that are a bit better organized than us.”

The time is right, he thinks. “There's a lot of uncertainty for American physicians.”

Along with the plan for the U.S. to leave the [World Health Organization](#), a recent [flip-flop](#) on federal aid funding—which has clinical researchers worried—there are ongoing issues with support for the National Institutes of Health, and possible changes to the Affordable Care Act. At the state level, physicians might be worried about interference in care, especially around reproductive health, gender-affirming care and medical assistance in death.

“When we engage with our members, their top concern over the last several years has been the physician shortage,” says Johnson, by way of explaining why his organization is dabbling in recruitment. In fact, Manitoba has the fewest family physicians per capita in the country.

Targeting neighbouring states such as North and South Dakota, and states as farflung as Florida, has led to healthy web site traffic and some inquiries. The hope, says Johnson, is for Doctors Manitoba to show that such efforts work. The group would like the government to get more involved, in keeping with its promise to add 400 new doctors. The province has the ability, as Johnson puts it, to “roll out the red carpet” and offer enticements for newcomers.

Indeed, across the country, many provinces have programs that target U.S. and overseas doctors. Nova Scotia Health's [More Than Medicine](#) website paints the province as an “ocean playground”—with gorgeous pictures to prove it—and offers information about career pathways, job and incentives, including a \$10,000 relocation bonus.

“The U.S. market has been a jurisdiction we've recruited from for the last five years. It's not something new for us,” says Katrina Philopoulos, provincial director of physician recruitment.

She notes that not all provinces have a dedicated recruitment team, plus Nova Scotia was the first province to grant board-certified U.S. doctors automatic full licensure, as of early 2023.

“That created a bump in interest for U.S. physicians to come here,” she says, noting that the province is in ongoing conversations with doctors from many eastern seaboard states, but has also lured physicians from Texas and Florida.

In 2024, recruitment from the U.S. made up about 7% of the province's newly brought-in doctors, but Philopoulos wonders if could be higher this year. “We definitely have more interest lately. People are trying in all professions, not just in medicine, to think about their situation and where they're living.”

She notes that the decision to move is a complex and personal one.

John Philpott of Nova Scotia-based [CanAm Physician Recruiting](#) says politics influences few relocations by doctors. He speaks to at least one medical professional a day from the U.S. about what they might find working in Canada, and finances come up often.

“A lot really depends on where you’re practicing and the taxation and rate of pay,” he says, adding that those working in prestigious academic hospitals in the U.S. sometimes end up with dismal compensation because they’re meant to enjoy the prestige.

However, he says, most U.S. doctors are well paid and some states charge minimal taxes. “If you're in a private clinic environment with the right setup in the and the right state, you're going to make more than any Canadian,” he says.

Philpott predicts the planned increase in capital gains tax — now deferred to 2026 — and other financial factors will be more important to doctors than political drama. “I think we’re going to have a brain drain out of Canada, just like we had back in the ‘80s and ‘90s, when the politics settle down.” And if part of the changes south of the border include tax cuts, that will make recruitment for provinces even more difficult.

Philopoulos says recruiting doctors from other provinces, the U.S. and other countries will remain a competitive task in the coming years, because the shortage expands beyond North America. “This is not a Nova Scotia problem, or a Canadian problem, it’s a worldwide problem. It’s a global competition for physicians and all healthcare human resources.”