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Memorandum

Primary Care Division

Ministry of Health

Date: July 15, 2022

To: Primary Care Network Partners, Resident Doctors of BC, Doctors of BC

**Re: Update on Family Medicine Resident and New to Practice Family Physician
Longitudinal Practice Incentives**

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to provide an update on the family medicine resident and new-to-practice (NTP) family physician (FP) longitudinal practice incentives. This includes an overview of the incentives as well as some clarifications resulting from questions and feedback the Ministry of Health has received over the past several weeks from interested physicians and other partners. As new questions arise, we are committed to providing further clarifications, which may be helpful to those considering the opportunity.

As you are likely aware, the Ministry and Doctors of BC are actively involved in discussions on a range of issues related to the sustainability of family medicine as the foundation of primary care in our province. Many of the challenges that need to be addressed are longstanding and common in jurisdictions throughout Canada, and there are a number of different perspectives among physicians and other partners on potential solutions.

The Ministry values the work of all FPs in British Columbia and is committed to working to address these issues in a timely manner with the Doctors of BC as the organization formally representing FPs in our province. The Doctors of BC is our partner in the Physician Master Agreement (PMA) as well as various collaborative tables such as the General Practice Services Committee, Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues and Shared Care Committee, among others. These forums exist to support the collaborative work underway to improve the experience of both FPs and their patients.

We also value our constructive relationship with the Resident Doctors of BC and the engagement sessions with residents that Resident Doctors of BC has hosted over the past few years, as well as the valuable information that Resident Doctors of BC has provided the Ministry regarding resident views on practice through its Graduating Resident Survey.

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Over the past several months, it was made clear to the Ministry that immediate action must be taken in the short term while longer term solutions are being developed. The incentives offered to family medicine residents and NTP FPs should be considered as one element of what will be a broader and more comprehensive suite of short, medium and long-term actions identified by the Ministry and Doctors of BC.

The NTP FP incentives are not intended to solve all challenges related to primary care for all FPs, clinics and practice scenarios at once. We recognize there is more work to do, and we anticipate having more to say about our ongoing engagement with the Doctors of BC in the weeks ahead.

As well, any new compensation arrangements or incentives that may arise from discussion between the Ministry and Doctors of BC during PMA negotiations will be available to any NTP FPs signing onto the incentives currently on offer.

Overview of Incentives

- The following incentives are offered to all family medicine residents and NTP FPs who completed their medical residencies in 2021 or 2022:
 - \$295,457 NTP contract rate (year two rate of current contract);
 - \$25,000 signing bonus;
 - \$50,000 loan forgiveness payment; and,
 - Potential for additional contributions to loan forgiveness of \$20,000 per year for years two to five.
- The incentives will be offered until May 31, 2023. The Ministry of Health will assess over the course of 2022-23 whether the incentives will continue to be offered beyond that date.
- There are no limits on the availability of NTP service contracts for communities provided that the parties work in good faith to meet the terms of the contracts, particularly the attachment expectations.

Eligibility

- As stated, all NTP FPs who completed their medical residencies in 2021 or 2022 are eligible for the incentives outlined above. This includes international medical graduates (IMGs) who completed their family medicine residency through the IMG-BC program.
- The incentives will also be available to those NTP FPs completing their residencies in 2021 or 2022 who have already committed to and are working in a longitudinal practice. Note that the new contract rate will not be applied retroactively to past service time if the physician is already working under a NTP service contract.

- NTP FPs who completed their residencies prior to 2021 and are already working on a service contract in longitudinal primary care are eligible for the new contract rate (assuming they are not already receiving it). They are also potentially eligible for the annual \$20,000 loan forgiveness payments from years two to five depending on demonstrated eligibility and their year of practice under the service contract. They will not be eligible for the \$25,000 signing bonus and/or year one \$50,000 loan forgiveness payment.
- To receive the incentives, a resident or NTP FP must agree to work in a longitudinal family practice setting, sign on to a NTP service contract and work in good faith to meet the terms of the contract.
- As these incentives are intended to promote longitudinal practice, which includes taking responsibility for a panel of patients, FPs must commit to no less than a .5 FTE. Incentives will be pro-rated accordingly for any commitment less than a full FTE.
- Eligible practice settings include FP practices, community health centres, First Nations primary care clinics, nurse practitioner primary care clinics, and urgent and primary care centres, with the requirement that the NTP FP is providing longitudinal, full-service primary care to a panel of patients (i.e., not episodic care) in those settings in accordance with the terms of the NTP service contract.

Loan Forgiveness

- For the loan forgiveness payments, eligible loans will include both government-sponsored student loans as well as private loans or lines of credit. The candidate will need to demonstrate a loan is associated with medical education and training and provide the amount of the outstanding loan as of the start of the NTP service contract.

Overhead

- In addition to the individual incentives, the Ministry will also provide an overhead contribution of \$75,000 per FTE per year to each clinic hosting a NTP FP under this arrangement. This payment is intended to significantly reduce or in some cases eliminate the amount of overhead the NTP will be required to contribute to their host clinic.
- Clinics already hosting NTP FPs who completed their residency prior to 2021 and who are working in longitudinal practice under a NTP service contract are also eligible to receive the overhead payment.

For more information:

- Physicians who are interested in the NTP contract are encouraged to explore opportunities posted on the Health Employers Association of BC's HealthMatchBC [website](#) or by contacting Audra Fediurek, Vice President, Human Resources Strategies and Services, Health Match BC, at audra.fediurek@heabc.bc.ca.
- Physicians who are interested in working in a community which has a Primary Care Network (PCN) may also contact their local PCN manager or division of family practice or health authority to explore opportunities. If the community of interest does not yet have a PCN, requests will be supported by the local division of family practice and/or health authority.

We will continue to keep you updated as we move forward. For example, specific administrative processes for the incentives (e.g., confirmation of loan information, flow of funds, etc.) are under development and will be communicated shortly. Updates will be posted to the HealthMatchBC website.

Thank you again for your support as we work together to strengthen access to primary care in British Columbia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ted Patterson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ted Patterson
Assistant Deputy Minister
Primary Care Division
Ministry of Health