# PATHWAY TOPRACTICE



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### INTRODUCTION

You've finished medical school, you're in residency, and you're ready to take your career to the next level.

This Pathway to Practice guide can help you one step at a time. Each section has tasks you should consider as you move closer to commencing practice. While some of the tasks happen immediately, getting started will help reduce stress as you move closer to the first day of practice.

Be aware that this document is not an exhaustive "how to" manual. The guide will advise you to complete some of the more notable steps and alert you to new ones throughout your residency.

The Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency is here to guide you through residency and transition to practice. Please contact us at info@saskdocs.ca or (306) 933-5000 and let us connect you with the right opportunity today.



### **COUNTDOWN TO PRACTICE – THE CHECKLIST**

TIMEFRAME	TASKS
24-18 MONTHS FROM COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY	☐ Contact us for advice on your career planning ☐ Create or update your profile at saskdocs.ca
	☐ Apply for life and disability insurance ☐ Take advantage of the Saskatchewan Electives Support Program
18-12 MONTHS FROM COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY	<ul> <li>□ Connect with your professional network</li> <li>□ Discuss potential practice opportunities</li> <li>□ Keep your saskdocs.ca profile updated</li> <li>□ Identify your perfect opportunity</li> </ul>
12-6 MONTHS FROM COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY	<ul> <li>□ Take advantage of the Saskatchewan Electives Support Program</li> <li>□ Apply for practice opportunities</li> <li>□ Review your ROS obligations (if applicable)</li> <li>□ Review, negotiate, and finalize contract(s)</li> <li>□ Get practice management counselling</li> </ul>
6-0 MONTHS FROM COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY	<ul> <li>□ Apply for licensure with the CPSS</li> <li>□ Contact the CMPA to update your membership</li> <li>□ Register for eHR viewer account</li> <li>□ Contact the Saskatchewan EMR program</li> <li>□ Apply to become an SHA practitioner staff member</li> <li>□ Learn how to bill</li> <li>□ Obtain billing number and set up direct deposit</li> <li>□ Seek advice regarding incorporation</li> </ul>
AFTER STARTING PRACTICE	<ul> <li>□ Update your SMA information</li> <li>□ Participate in professional development opportunities</li> <li>□ Explore incentives available for practising physicians</li> </ul>

### 24-18 MONTHS FROM COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY

### ► Connect with us and get advice on your career planning

Recruitment specialists want to connect with you and help you find resources and programs to support your career aspirations. We can meet with you one-on-one, by phone, or by email.

We can provide information on:

- Labour market data for Saskatchewan and Canada
- Provincial and federal initiatives
- Remuneration
- Communities and services
- Demographics
- Opportunities
- Career advising

### ► Create or update your profile at saskdocs.ca including your CV

It is recommended you create and update your profile at saskdocs.ca early on in residency. If you need help creating or accessing your profile, please contact us. By completing your profile, you will:

- Receive new job notifications, information on upcoming events, and recruitment and retention initiatives;
- Be able to apply directly online to career opportunities throughout Saskatchewan.

Creating a CV is critical for highlighting your education, experience, research, awards, and accomplishments related to your professional medical career.

The 🗗 University of Saskatchewan Student Employment and Career Centre is a great resource to help you create a CV. Also see Appendix A for more tips.

# ➤ Contact the Saskatchewan Medical Association (SMA) regarding your life and disability insurance coverage

During your residency, your SMA life and disability insurance is paid by the University of Saskatchewan through the Resident Doctors of Saskatchewan (RDoS) collective agreement. Each plan needs to be applied for in order to obtain coverage and can continue following residency without any medical or financial underwriting.

⊠ insurance@sma.sk.ca



# ► Expand your horizons with the ☐ Saskatchewan Electives Support Program

This program can help residents who are pursuing electives in eligible communities to keep them focused on making the most out of their electives.

It provides reimbursement for travel and accommodation expenses for up to \$2,000 per residency year for eligible electives of up to four weeks in duration. Residents may apply for reimbursement for multiple electives each year.

#### TIP:

Electives are an opportunity to network, engage, and explore environments in new communities as you expand your network along your career pathway. You can learn about the different styles of practice; how other areas of the province provide services and the support teams they have in place.



### ► Residents' Programs and Incentives

As you journey through residency, there are many programs for you to take advantage of and resources to help you along the way. The following programs and incentives may be available throughout your residency; they could come from the federal or provincial government, the SMA, and/or the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA). Additional information can be found online. Note that programs' details may change.

### **☐** Graduate Retention Program

Offers rebates of up to \$20,000 of tuition fees paid by eligible graduates who live in Saskatchewan and file a tax return.

### **☐** Family Medicine Resident Bursary

Provides bursaries of \$25,000/year for up to three years for family medicine residents who agree to provide service to rural, regional, or northern Saskatchewan communities.

Deadline to apply is October 31st.

### ☐ Special Needs Loan Program

Provides assistance to residents training to practice in under-serviced areas in rural,

regional, or northern Saskatchewan who are faced with difficult financial circumstances.

### ☐ Family Medicine Rural and Regional Clinical Skills Program

A program that will enhance residents' clinical skills and give a positive introduction to rural medicine by working alongside a rural or regional family physician while they are providing in-patient and emergency weekend on-call coverage.

### ☐ Rural & Regional Winter Driving Fund

For residents with a ROS in rural/regional Saskatchewan, this fund is a one-time payment of up to \$500 towards the course fees of a winter driving course.

### ☐ Roadmap Program for Family Medicine Residents

A program designed to give family medicine residents a taste of what it's like to live and practice in rural and regional parts of Saskatchewan.





### 18-12 MONTHS FROM COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY

# ► Connect with your professional network and browse current opportunities

Throughout your residency, you will interact with peers, mentors, and colleagues in various health professions. These interactions will help you identify practice opportunities and continue establishing professional relationships.

At this stage, you should also start browsing current opportunities on the saskdocs.ca job board and exploring specific postings for your future practice.

### ► Discuss potential practice opportunities and attend site visits

As you explore your future practice opportunities, take the time to learn about the

various practice types and primary care services throughout the province.

Build relationships by evaluating the different communities and practices, and connect with them to arrange site visits. Visiting a location will give you the chance to expand your network, meet staff, ask questions, and see the working environment in action.

### ► Keep your profile and CV updated at saskdocs.ca

Visit your profile at saskdocs.ca regularly to keep it updated. This includes your CV and information like exams or courses taken, practice and personal preferences, changes within your residency, etc.

Having your most recent information ensures we can guide you in the right direction!

### ► Start identifying your perfect opportunity in Saskatchewan

Knowing what you are looking for in your future practice and community will help you find the right fit.

There are many factors to evaluate so it is important to take some time to make note of what kind of practice you are interested in and what amenities are important to you and your family.

Considering these important factors will help you find your perfect opportunity. Review the following information and questions as you search for it.

#### Job market

- View opportunities posted on saskdocs.ca.
- Connect with us, your professional networks, department heads, and mentors.

### **Practice type**

- Are you planning on practising full-time, part- time, or as a locum clinician?
- Do you want to practice in an urban, regional, rural, or remote area?
- Are there opportunities for future growth and career development?
- Are you interested in leadership opportunities?
- Are there teaching opportunities or obligations?
- What size of practice would you consider?

#### Family needs

- Are schools and shopping, as well as recreational, cultural, and religious facilities, readily available and accessible?
- Are there employment opportunities for your significant other and family?

#### **Community**

- Consider things like size, population, demographics and proximity to amenities when looking at a community.
- These factors are important as you will live in the community and serve the residents.

### Lifestyle

- Define your work-life balance.
- How does your health and wellness fit into this balance?
- Is there flexibility for your schedule and/or office hours?

#### **Payment methods**

 Understand what remuneration models are available to you, whether it be Feefor-Service (FFS), contract, or other.

### Health records systems

- Does the practice have, or intend to have, EMR?
- If they use EMR, which system do they have in place? Med Access or Accuro?

### Return of Service (ROS) obligations

 Does the practice opportunity fulfill the requirements of your ROS agreement?

### ► Start identifying your perfect opportunity in Saskatchewan – *Continued*

### Scope of practice

- Does the practice offer variety?
- What services do you want to provide as part of your practice? Examples include emergency room coverage, long-term care, obstetrics, and more.
- Are the physician(s) supported by other health professionals?
- What are the on-call obligations and are they shared?
- What is the average number of patients seen per day and how much time is allocated to each?
- When and where are procedures done? How much time is allocated for procedures?
- How are referrals done within the practice?

### **Practice operations**

- Does the group have an association or partnership agreement?
- Will expenses be shared equally, or will they be proportionate to each physician's use or billings?
- Know what you are signing when it comes to contracts and agreements.
   Seek guidance from the SMA when needed.
- Have you reviewed the agreement in detail with the SMA, your lawyer, and accountant?
- Will your personal needs for equipment and office space be met?
- What responsibility will you have for hiring and evaluating staff?



### 12-6 MONTHS FROM COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY

### ► Apply for practice opportunities

If you haven't already done so, now is the time to start applying for practice opportunities. Keep your documents in a centralized location such as an online drive to access and update easily. The documents you store could include certificates, cover letter, CV, and licensure.

Make sure your CV and cover letter are tailored to each opportunity. Please see Appendix A which includes tips for CV content and format. A cover letter is highly recommended to complement your CV as you can personalize your interest in a particular opportunity and highlight why you are the most ideal candidate.

Take into account that many opportunities are filled through personal networks and may not be posted publicly. Building your professional network is important to learn about available and forecasted opportunities.

#### TIP:

Take advantage of discussing opportunities with recruiters at career fairs and conferences. They are great places to network with colleagues and learn more about opportunities in the province. Follow up with your contacts to show your interest and thank them for their time.

### ► Review your ROS agreement obligations (if applicable)

If you have signed an ROS as part of your residency program, or for a bursary awarded by the SMA, ensure you understand your agreement obligations. For further information and questions, please contact us.

#### ⊠ contract@saskdocs.ca

### ► Contact the SMA to review, negotiate, and finalize contract(s) or offer(s)

As a member of the SMA, staff are available to support your transition into practice. They have experts to answer questions regarding contracts, insurance, benefits, incentives, and much more. The SMA is a great resource to help you choose the right practice and ensure you get the best professional advice.

#### Saskatchewan Medical Association

(306) 244-2196

**1**-800-667-3781 (Toll-Free)

⊠ sma@sma.sk.ca

# ► Obtain professional counselling before transitioning into practice management

Consider financial, managerial, and legal counselling by approaching experienced professionals who are familiar with the

#### ► 12 -6 MONTHS FROM COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY CONTINUED

medical area. You may also want to include advice that applies to your well-being and your spousal and family needs.

- Contract negotiation: institutional, academic or private practice, locums, operating room time, remuneration options and research, ROS obligations.
- Financial wellness: Continuing Medical Training (CME), insurance, tax, debt management, and accounting.
- Legal: take medico-legal advice from a lawyer experienced in serving medical professionals.

 Practice management: evaluating practice options, remuneration and payment options, setting up a practice, staffing, and office technology.

#### TIP:

There are also a number of practice management opportunities and seminars offered by the Post Graduate Medical Education Office, MD Financial, MCMPA and MCMA. Practice management is included in the MCANNEDS competencies and is essential for future success as a physician. Topics include contract negotiation, financial wellness, insurance requirements, tax and accounting issues, and various aspects of practice management.



### Residents' Programs and Incentives

During the final twelve months of residency, you can continue leveraging the different programs and incentives available as a medical resident in Saskatchewan. Below are some examples:

### ☐ Rural and Regional Emergency Care Continuing Medical Education Fund

For family medicine residents with an ROS in rural/regional Saskatchewan, this fund reimburses the cost of tuition and a portion of travel and accommodation expenses associated with ACLS, PALS, ATLS, NRP, ALSO, ALARM, and AIME.

#### TIP:

Stay connected with your network and keep exploring our Saskatchewan communities through electives. Remember to leverage the Saskatchewan Electives Support Program to help you cover costs for travel and accommodations.

### ☐ Rural and Regional Physician Enhancement Training Program

Provides funding for two second-year family medicine residents to complete a third year of training in a supernumerary position, to enhance their skills in obstetrics, anesthesia, general surgery, psychiatry, internal medicine, or geriatrics at the University of Saskatchewan.



### 6-0 MONTHS FROM COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY

# ► Apply for licensure with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CPSS)

Residents nearing the end of their residency program who plan to practice medicine in Saskatchewan must apply for licensure with the CPSS and obtain their billing numbers.

Application is done by submitting a *Review of Qualifications/Complete Application* through the Application for Medical Registration (AMR) hosted on physiciansapply.ca.

CPSS

**(** (306) 244-7355

Registration and licensing inquiries:

⊠ cpssreg@cps.sk.ca

General inquiries:

#### TIP:

To ensure no delays, select "Share" with CPSS when you upload documents to physiciansapply.ca for Saskatchewan licensure.

# ► Contact the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA) regarding your membership

Call the CMPA four to five weeks prior to completing your residency to inform them of your completion date and the change to your work code.

☐ CMPA **L** 1-800-267-6522 (Toll-Free)

### ► Register for an Electronic Health Record (eHR) Viewer account

eHealth Saskatchewan is a government organization that collects, combines, stores, and manages the electronic health records of Saskatchewan's citizens. The eHR Viewer gives doctors and other healthcare providers secure and instant access to their patients' electronic health information.

Visit ☐ eHealth Saskatchewan to set up your eHR Viewer.

### ► Contact the Saskatchewan Electronic Medical Record (EMR) program for setup and usage

The Saskatchewan EMR program assists in the setup and use of medical records in clinics. Through a joint funding agreement between the SMA, eHealth Saskatchewan, and the Ministry of Health, physicians receive ongoing support for the approved EMR systems including funding to assist with implementation and use.

⊠ emr@sma.sk.ca

# ► Apply to become an SHA practitioner staff member to obtain privileges

Dependent on the type of services you will provide and the community in which you work, you may need to be a member of practitioner staff with the SHA. This will allow you to provide care in SHA facilities and access testing services.

The Application for Appointment to Practitioner Staff can be obtained from the Practitioner Staff Affairs office in the community where you will practice. Once your application and supporting documentation are submitted, they will be reviewed and if approved, you will receive privileges to practice in an SHA facility. A current criminal record check, including a vulnerable sector search, will be required to obtain privileges.

#### ► Learn how to bill

The Ministry of Health, Medical Services Branch (MSB) offers online billing courses for free. Learn how to bill by completing MSB's comprehensive course that outlines the processes involved in the billing cycle.

This includes everything from submitting and reconciling claims to the appropriate application of the service codes. The course is self-paced so you can stop, save, and resume at any time during a 60-day period. The billing course will build your confidence and knowledge which will assist you in transitioning into practice.

You can enroll in the course by completing the self-sign-up on the MSB website.

A current Physicians Payment Schedule on the SMA website is also required to complete the course.

# ► Complete paperwork to obtain billing number and set up direct deposit

Once you gain licensure from the CPSS, a notification is sent to the MSB informing them of your license and clinic details. MSB will assign you a billing number and fax the billing agreement to the clinic where you will practice. It is mandatory for you to complete the billing agreement and attach the requested documents.

You can contact an MSB caseworker at the Physician Registry and Support Services by calling (306) 798-0013 for further questions about your billing number.

### ► Seek advice regarding incorporation

Physicians holding a regular or provisional license may be eligible to hold a permit with CPSS for a Medical Professional Corporation (MPC).

If you incorporate with the provincial ISC Corporate Registry in Saskatchewan, the corporation is a separate legal entity. You can then apply for an MPC permit with CPSS and have your billings directed to your MPC. You have control over the MPC, but the corporation earns income and pays tax on it.

When considering incorporating, remember to contact your accountant or lawyer to seek advice.

#### Settlement Resources

If moving to a new location within
Saskatchewan is in your plans, below are some helpful resources. We can also help you connect with communities for settlement purposes. Having a local volunteer contact will make it easier to find the information you may be looking for within that specific community.

### Saskatchewan childcare and schools

The following resources provide an overview of childcare and school systems in Saskatchewan:

- ☐ Licensed Child Care Facility in Your Community
- ☐ Saskatchewan Ministry of Education General Information
- ☐ Saskatchewan School Boards Association
- □ Saskatchewan Curriculum

### Family employment

Below are job boards that may help your partner and other family members find employment:

- ☐ Health Careers In Saskatchewan
- □ Saskjobs.ca
- ☐ Government of Canada Job Bank

#### Recreational activities

Saskatchewan has activities for everyone no matter the time of year. Please visit Tourism Saskatchewan for more information. Another great source of information is the Saskatchewanderer. You can follow them at Tourism Saskatchewan / Saskatchewanderer.

### **Changing mailing address**

ExpressAddress allows residential customers to notify multiple Saskatchewan organizations of their new address (e.g., telephone, health cards, vehicle registration, library, natural gas, and much more).

### Housing/renting arrangements

If you are looking to rent or purchase a place, many websites can assist you with your search. One of the most common web-based resources to help you with any real estate needs is www.realtor.ca.

Some of the best leads on renting or owning a home in any community are from word of mouth. Contact municipal authorities to see if they have any rental lists or advice as to who may be able to assist you.



### ► Update your SMA membership, insurance, and contact information

Log in to your MySMA Member Portal to make any required changes to your information.

You will also want to consider increasing your insurance coverage to reflect your new income and contract obligations.

### ► Participate in professional development opportunities

Throughout your career, there will be opportunities to sit on various committees or boards. These bodies will be looking for physicians with leadership experience and knowledge. Consider mentorships (both formal and informal) to develop your career as a clinician.

You could also apply to the Continuing Medical Education Fund, administered by the SMA, to help you cover the costs associated with continuing medical education.

#### TIP:

Take advantage of other opportunities to stay on top of requirements. An example of this would be maintaining your Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) certification. Consider the Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) and Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) certifications.

### ► Explore the incentives available to practising physicians

There are many financial, mentoring, and continuing professional development benefits rewarding physicians who establish their practice in our province. To learn more, visit the link provided in each reference with more information displayed.

### ☐ Rural Physician Incentive Program (RPIP)

RPIP provides up to \$200,000 over five years to family physicians who begin practising in an eligible rural or remote community.

### **□** SMA Programs & Benefits

- Tor practising physicians
- Compensation programs
- 🗗 Professional development

### ☐ Canadian Student Loan Forgiveness for Family Doctors

Physicians practising in designated rural and remote communities may receive forgiveness on their Canadian student loan balance up to \$40,000 over a maximum of five years.

# ☐ Coaching & Mentorship Program for Saskatchewan Physicians (CoMPAS)

Open to all physicians in their first five years of practice in Saskatchewan (Coachee/Mentee) to create and support professional connections and relationships amongst physician peers.

### APPENDIX A - TIPS FOR WRITING A CV

### **Content Tips**

- Use a professional email address and voicemail.
- Number each page and include your name and contact information (phone and email).
   Your mailing address may be included on the first page only or on all pages.
- Lead with your education, professional qualifications (i.e., exams and certifications), memberships, and licensure or eligibility for licensure with CPSS. Recruiters look for this information first when screening potential applicants.
- Each credential should include the name of the degree/certificate/diploma, the name and location of the institution, and the year of completion.
- When describing your experience, relate the content to the position for which you are applying (i.e., responsibilities, research, job titles).
- If you are applying for academic positions, include information such as research, publications, teaching, presentations, awards, etc.
- Include any electives you have taken, especially if you took one in the community where you intend to practice. Be sure to specify the location and time period when you took it.
- A high school diploma can be omitted from your resume once you enter college.

- Point out special interests related to practice and/or research. This element is always valued by area department leaders.
- You may also want to add extracurricular activities, languages (other than English), scholarships, and awards (recent and relevant), and teaching experience.
- Avoid including photographs, birth dates, marital status, etc. A CV does not contain personal information and it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of these factors.
- Ask someone to review your resume before you submit your application and confirm that there are no errors.
- Use the resume templates only as a guide.
   Your resume should reflect your personality.

### **Format Tips**

- Make your CV easy to read. Use bullet points, specify subheadings and sections. Recruiters will usually only spend a few minutes at the review stage.
- Keep your format consistent (e.g., font, sizes, style, alignment). For example, if you start putting date ranges on the right side of the page, continue throughout the entire document.
- Avoid using too much "white space." If your content is a page and a half long, try editing it so that the CV fits on one page, or modify the format to extend it to two full pages.

### **APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW PREPARATION**

When you've secured an interview it's important to take time to prepare in order to feel confident and ready to shine. Take some time to review sample questions that you may be asked during your interview.

Remember, an interview is a two-way street. You should make a list of questions you are prepared to ask during the interview to help make your decision.

Dress professionally, plan to arrive early, print a copy of your cover letter, CV, and references. You may also consider taking a notebook.

It is important to give yourself some time before the interview to relax. Make sure you have selected your references beforehand. Be sure that anyone you list is aware that they may expect a call and has agreed to give you a positive reference. You may want to provide your references with the job posting or any additional information.

Here are some examples of interview questions:

### **Introduction questions**

- Tell me about yourself.
- Where were you trained? Describe any other prior education.
- Why did you choose your area of specialty?
- Do you have specific areas of interest?
- What supervisory or leadership roles have you held?

**Behavioral questions** 

- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation, and you demonstrated your coping skills.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy which you did not agree with.
- What do you do if you disagree with a patient?
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.

### **Clinical questions**

- What is your approach to handling multiple comorbidities in a patient in a rural community?
- How do you manage a patient with addictions?
- How do you include primary care physicians in your patient management? (as a specialist)
- How do you include your interdisciplinary team in patient management? (family medicine)

#### Other

- What do you know about the hospital/clinic?
- How can you contribute to the efficient and high-quality service to patients?
- Are there any procedures you would not perform?
- Do you have any concerns/issues with the call rotation?
- Do you have any concerns with traveling to surrounding communities to provide care?

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#### ► ► APPENDIX B - INTERVIEW PREPARATION CONTINUED

- Are you interested in a generalized/broad scope of practice?
- Are you interested in working with medical students and/or residents in a teaching capacity?
- When would you be available to start?

### Sample questions to ask during an interview

- What is the physician complement in the clinic and/or department?
- What are the call requirements?
- What are the hours of work?
- Is there overhead?
- What is the payment model? Fee-forservice, contract, or salary?
- Where are procedures done, in-office or at a hospital?
- Does the clinic have, or intend to have, electronic medical records?
- How are referrals done?
- Do you know of any employment opportunities for my significant other or suggestions on who to talk to?

#### TIP:

References can be Program Directors, Chiefs, Preceptors, Physician Leads, etc. Choose someone familiar with your clinical skills who can attest to your ability to work as part of a team and provide excellent care to patients. Bring to the interview a list of references; include names, titles, organization, and contact details.

