

Practice Visit Information Sheet

Practice Principal/Manager



It is in the best interest of the practice and the visiting doctor to give and receive information that will assist both parties to make an informed decision to bring about a successful outcome.

Recruitment of GPs to rural practice can be challenging and competitive and you must be prepared to allocate time and put in effort to attract a doctor to your practice. You should be aware that your practice might not be the only practice being visited by the doctor who is looking for a position. The key is to be well prepared!

Practice visits are an opportunity for you to “sell” the benefits of your practice and location and to market and highlight the positive aspects of rural practice. What has your practice “got” that will attract a visiting doctor to accept the position? Promote the positive aspects; however, be realistic about any negative aspects or potential issues.

If possible, arrange an overnight stay for the visiting doctor (and family) and an evening meal with some (or all) of the practice GPs and their families. Will the practice fund the accommodation and evening meal?

Best results are achieved by being upfront and very clear regarding the employment and income package:

- Discuss and disclose the financial details of what is on offer by the practice – what value add can the practice offer the doctor? Assistance? Support?
- HAVE A PREPARED CONTRACT (Refer to AMA Guidelines for Contract & RACGP ‘Reaching a Fair Deal’ Employment Kit’)
- What incentives are on offer (from either the practice or the local hospital)? This includes such items as guaranteed minimum income (e.g. for the first 3 - 6 months) rental assistance, relocation assistance etc.

Know this information prior to the practice visit – ensure that you can demonstrate the practice can support another GP with a suitable level of remuneration and support. All this information needs to be clearly documented and accurate. It is important that the visiting doctor has clear documentation that he/she can take away and consider again after the visit.

Be Prepared – it is vital that there is a practice information kit available to provide to the visiting doctor. It is also suggested that the practice protocols should also be available in written format. This might include information on the practice “culture”. It is also important that questions can be clearly and confidently answered during the visit. Good communication and knowledge lessens the risk of future legal implications in regard to contracts and expectations.

It is important that you use the practice visit as an opportunity to find out as much as you can about the doctor, their professional and personal requirements, expectations, and family requirements. Do their skill set and cultural background and requirements “fit” with your practice, the practice values and principles?

The following is a list of questions and issues that the visiting doctor is likely to cover and that RWAV suggests are covered during the visit. Do not hesitate to seek information on matters that may not be covered in this list. Feel free to ask other questions. RWAV has provided this information for your assistance and advice only.

Most of the points covered will be addressed in your Practice Information Kit, however, it is good to be prepared for discussion with the doctor during the visit when issues can be answered confidently and directly.

VISITING DOCTORS NAME:		
POINTS TO CONSIDER DURING VISIT DISCUSSION WITH THE DOCTOR	RESPONSE/ACTIONS	
<p>First impressions count:</p> <p>Allocate time for you (allow 45 minutes or more) and your colleagues to spend with the visiting doctor.</p> <p>Ensure other doctors in the practice are available to at least meet and acknowledge the visiting doctor. Either organise appointment times to meet individually or have time allocated for a group meeting.</p> <p>The Practice Manager should also be available to meet and spend time with the visiting doctor</p>		
<p>Practice information: Include a practice tour of the waiting room, consultation rooms, treatment room, work areas, staff facilities.</p> <p>Where will the “new” doctor be located?</p> <p>Practice equipment...where is it stored, what is available?</p> <p>Patient records – how and where are patient records maintained and accessed?</p> <p>What is the patient billing – bulk billing or private?</p> <p>Is the practice accredited? What PIP is available?</p> <p>What are the practice referral patterns?</p> <p>A quick demonstration of any computer system used at the practice may be useful. ie: Medical Director</p>		
<p>Income information: What is the potential and likely income (gross) and options (e.g. a guaranteed salary for a period of 3 – 6 months with a review after this period), fee for service, opportunity for, and/or expectation of, joining as an associate or partner?</p> <p>What is the basic payment package on offer? Is it a gross wage or a percentage of earnings?</p> <p>What are the practice costs (percentage)? Will practice costs be deducted from either the GPs income or the percentage of takings? Will this amount be a set amount or a percentage of takings?</p> <p>Talk to the doctor about ‘value add’ support such as administration support to the doctor and clinical support through the practice nurse and allied health team.</p>		
<p>Position information: Is the position full time or part time?</p> <p>How many sessions per week will the doctor work? Is the position procedural or for a generalist? What are the procedural requirements? Length of position. Is there a probation period? Is there an expectation that the “new” GP will become an associate or partner?</p> <p>What are the on call and after hour requirements (on call – how often and payment rates, requirement for weekend work).</p> <p>Terms and conditions of employment – formal written agreed contract of employment (not an offer and acceptance on a handshake alone!) including income, practice incentives, annual leave, sick leave,</p>		

<p>professional development leave, study leave, locum coverage, after hours, on call requirements, time off during the week etc. Paid leave versus unpaid leave.</p> <p>HAVE A PREPARED CONTRACT for doctor to read and begin negotiations.</p> <p>Both parties prior to commencement should sign a contract of employment.</p>	
<p>Assistance and support available -</p> <p>Practice Orientation: An important step to assist in a smooth and successful transition for the new doctor into your practice. Provide detail on what is covered during the practice orientation.</p> <p>A good workplace orientation will help the new doctor find out about their expected role, and detail procedures of the position.</p> <p>Are any incentives available (e.g. accommodation, car, insurance)?</p> <p>If required, seek taxation advice regarding issues such as Fringe Benefits Tax.</p> <p>Discuss the daily routine of the practice and also the routine outside the practice.</p> <p>Patients - how will the practice assist a new doctor to establish a patient base?</p> <p>Requirements for hospital visits - what are the requirements to obtain Visiting Medical Officer rights, credentialing.</p> <p>What services are provided by the practice to the hospital outpatient department, nursing home, and aged care hostel?</p> <p>What are the general expectations of the practice? Practice values, culture.</p> <p>Is there an opportunity for you or another doctor within the practice to provide some level of supervision and/or support during the doctor's first couple of weeks work?</p> <p>Mentor - is one of the GPs prepared to act as mentor until the new doctor settles into the practice and the community.</p> <p>Specific areas of expertise and/or special interests of the doctors at the practice. What options are available for additional learning and support?</p> <p>What specialist services or support is available (in the town, visiting, referrals)?</p> <p>Is there a hospital, ambulance service, palliative care service?</p> <p>Practice demographics – morbidity, mortality. Include details on illnesses/issues impacting on the practice (e.g. drug and alcohol problems, aged care).</p> <p>What skill set is the practice seeking and does the visiting doctor have these skills?</p> <p>Insurance and indemnity – what assistance is available? Options and approximate costs</p> <p>What other allied health supports are available within the practice or</p>	

<p>town (e.g. allied health staff)?</p> <p>Perhaps look at offering Professional Development time to upskill with local specialist – dermatologist, palliative care etc; voucher to cover costs of Conference/Professional development away from the practice</p>	
<p>About the doctor : What are the special interests of the visiting doctor? Do these complement the practice? Is there facility to promote and accommodate any special interests?</p> <p>Advise the doctor of any regular education meetings your practice may hold</p> <p>Discuss what support the practice can provide if the doctor wants to take part in continuing medical education.</p> <p>Successfully filling a vacancy is not simply a case of recruiting a doctor – you may be recruiting the doctor and his or her family.</p> <p>Discuss what family support is available from within the practice.</p> <p>The doctor’s spouse should be welcomed and supported until settled into the community by the spouses of the practice GPs and staff.</p> <p>What employment opportunities are available for the doctor’s spouse?</p> <p>What is the career/employment of the spouse</p> <p>What schooling is required and available? Perhaps provide prospectus from local schools.</p> <p>Find out if there are any specific religious or cultural requirements of the doctor and his/her family.</p> <p>What future work, family, regulatory or education commitments does the doctor currently have that may interrupt practice time and disrupt the practice on either the short or long term?</p> <p>When can the doctor commence? Secure a start date and obtain a written commitment from the GP once the position is accepted.</p>	
<p>Referees – ensure the visiting doctor provides you with the names and current contact details of at least 2 referees (professional experience). Ensure the referees are current (at least one from the current position) and ALWAYS CHECK THE REFEREES.</p> <p>Follow Up – if, after the practice visit, you are very interested in the doctor, follow up with them via phone or email within the next few days. Show your interest and offer to provide them with any additional information that they require. Maintain ongoing contact until a decision is made.</p>	
<p>Town information:</p> <p>Arrange a tour of the town which will include examples of housing the new doctor can be reasonably expected to afford to buy/rent.</p> <p>If schooling is required, include schools in the tour so that the doctor and family know where to go to find out curriculum information</p>	

Further opportunities; Generally speaking most practices have good information and incentives for interested doctors to consider within the practice. It may also be worthwhile to consider opportunities for incentives outside the practice and into the community which will encourage the doctor and family into life outside the practice.

Some incentives to include when looking at recruiting a doctor to your practice may be: A 'Welcome Package' to include things like movie tickets, local restaurant vouchers, local produce vouchers, local tourist accommodation vouchers, local retail vouchers. Or perhaps paid Gym membership, or Health Insurance, or Child Care or an accommodation package

What is it that your practice could offer that may encourage the interested doctor and family to influence the choice of accepting this position?