

IERHA parts with Waterford Global

Regional doctor recruitment to continue without third party: Skinner

By Arlene Davidson

The contract between the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA) and Waterford Global has come to an end and will not be renewed, officials say.

IERHA spokesperson Lauralou Cicierski said that although the collaboration to recruit doctors to the region produced some benefits, the regional health authority will not be extending the contract.

"Our use of Waterford Global was a pilot project in Interlake-Eastern RHA. The terms of our contract with Waterford Global have been met and we have secured two excellent candidates, Dr. Garg and Dr. Williams, who provide physician services in Pinawa, Lac du Bonnet and Whitemouth," said Cicierski. "They also, to our benefit, are very interested in engaging with the communities they serve."

Blair Skinner, chair of the Eastern Region Community Health Committee (ERCHC) reported that his group of community representatives was in full agreement with the IERHA decision.

"I can say that the goal to recruit two doctors to the Pinawa/Lac du Bonnet/Whitemouth clinics was 100 per cent achieved and the individuals recruited have been awesome additions to health care in our area," Skinner said. "The project has restored reliable health care to our communities."

The IERHA partnered with Waterford Global in 2014 to help with physician recruitment and provide solutions to the doctor



Photo by Arlene Davidson

Blair Skinner reported that his committee is in full agreement with the IERHA's decision not to renew the contract with Waterford Global.

shortage in the region. The organization identified four doctors from the United Kingdom with an interest in relocating and working in the North Eastman region and arranged for these prospects to tour the region and confirm their interest in moving to Manitoba.

The doctors were selected and screened by the Waterford Global Corpora-

tion out of Winnipeg, and were recommended to the ERCHC and the IERHA for consideration.

Skinner said that the steps required to recruit a physician from another country have been documented and can now be followed without the need to involve a third party recruitment agency.

"Since we started work-

ing with Waterford Global, we've implemented a number of RHA driven recruitment strategies in conjunction with our community partners that we're confident will bring additional recruitment success," Cicierski said. "This includes establishing a clinical teaching unit that would be Selkirk based but supported by physicians across

the region who would provide medical students with practice opportunities."

Cicierski confirmed that Guardian Pharmacy in Beausejour has established a clinic with the intent to offer physician care.

"When they are successful in attracting a physician, the RHA has agreed to work with them to incorporate the physician into RHA service delivery if the physician is interested and has credentials appropriate for the additional RHA based work."

She added that the RHA is also anticipating the addition of a number of new physicians to Pine Falls through the International Medical Graduate program, and that this initiative will occur in the near future.

Skinner said that working together to recruit and retain physicians to the region remains an ongoing priority of the ERCHC and they will continue to work toward achieving the goal

of providing 24/7 emergency room service.

"Even when that goal has been achieved, we will continue to work hard to retain our medical personnel," said Skinner.

Cicierski reported that the recruitment fee paid to Waterford Global was \$90,000 per doctor, and that local communities pledged contributions to offset relocation costs.

Skinner said the important outcome of the project was the establishment of a partnership of communities working with the IERHA to recruit physicians to the job and the communities.

"If you want a physician to stay for the long haul, then they need to love both the job and the community," Skinner said. "That is the most important learning and the most effective way to recruit physicians to come for the long term. This is very important for long term sustainable health care."

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