

Physicians

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Working as a Physician

[NOC 2021: 31102/ NOC 2016: 3112]

Job Description

Working as a general practitioner and family physician, your duties may include:

- Assess patients to diagnose problems
- Recommend treatment, such as medication, surgery, or rehabilitation
- Treat patients or refer them to other health care workers
- Provide emergency care
- Perform and assist in routine surgery
- Deliver babies and provide pre-natal and post-natal care
- Specialize in a particular area of medicine

Sources:

WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/general-practitioners-and-family-physicians>

Career Cruising <https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/> [profile for Doctor]

Related occupations include:

- Allied primary health practitioners
- Chiropractors
- Managers in health care
- Other professional occupations in health diagnosing and treating
- Specialist physicians

Source: NOC, <https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/>

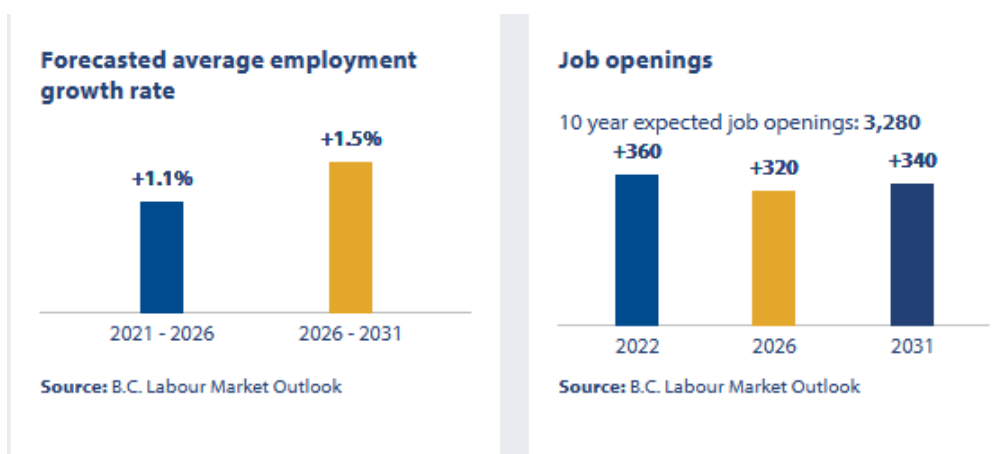
Industry Overview

Industry sources report that there is a strong demand for general practitioners [GPs] throughout British Columbia due to a growing and aging population. Smaller, northern, rural communities are in particular need of GPs.

In response to this shortage, the Government of British Columbia has increased opportunities for medical education by establishing medical programs at four distinct sites across the province: the Island Medical Program, Vancouver Fraser Medical Program, Southern Medical Program (Okanagan) and Northern Medical Program. Even so, there are still not enough graduates to replace the family physicians who retire every year. As a result, B.C. is increasingly dependent on importing physicians from other Canadian and international jurisdictions.

If you move to rural communities to practise you may receive incentives such as signing bonuses, student loan reductions, fee-for-service and flat sum premiums, or travel subsidies.

Job Outlook in BC, 2021-2031



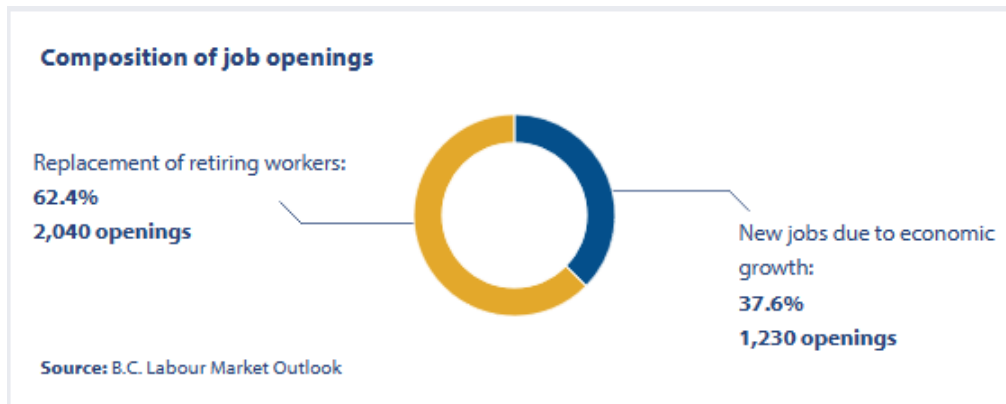


Chart from WorkBC

WorkBC provides job openings in BC regions from 2021-2031:

Region	Employment in 2021	Average Annual Employment Growth	Expected Number of Job Openings
Vancouver Island	1,440	1.5%	650
Lower Mainland / Southwest	5,490	1.4%	2,010
Thompson-Okanagan	1,010	1.2%	400
Kootenay	270	0.6%	90
Cariboo	310	0.4%	80
North Coast & Nechako	150	0.6%	40
Northeast	60	-0.2%	10

You can learn more about working as a physician in BC from:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for General Practitioners & Family Physicians**
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/general-practitioners-and-family-physicians>
- **Career Cruising**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/> [profile for Doctor]
Available from the VPL Digital Library

Types of Employers

General practitioners and family physicians usually work in private practice, including group or team practices, hospitals, and clinics.

Senior physicians may also work as hospital administrators, teach and / or conduct research at educational institutions, or work for government health authorities and other health related organizations.

Salary

The median annual salary for physicians in BC is \$164,237.

Physician Wages in BC

Community/Area	Salary (\$/year)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	66,967	164,237	302,235

Source: Job Bank Canada Wages <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

Most general practitioners are self-employed, which means you run your own clinic or office. You are paid directly by the government, and the amount you make depends on how many patients you see and the medical procedures you perform. If you are self-employed you spend some of your income on office expenses, supplies, insurance premiums and staff, therefore; your net income is less than the amount received from the government.

If work for hospitals and other medical organizations you will likely receive benefits in addition to your salary. Benefits may include health and life insurance, pension plans, and paid vacation and sick days. If you are self-employed you must supply your own benefits.

From WorkBC and Career Cruising database

Working Hours

Physicians often work irregular hours, including nights and weekends. You may also be on-call 24 hours a day when required to respond to emergencies. Resident physicians generally work long hours, which could be up to 60 hours per week.

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- strong communication and interpersonal skills
- strong analytical skills and a background in the sciences
- energetic personality
- patient, compassionate and enjoy helping people of all ages and backgrounds
- willing to keep up-to-date with rapid changes in the field of health
- decisive and able to work under stress

Education and Experience

- A doctor of medicine degree (MD) is required, which takes four years of undergraduate studies, as well as four years of medical school
- Two years of accredited residency training
- Completion of the examinations of the Medical Council of Canada (National Assessment Collaboration (NAC) Examination and MCC Qualifying Examination Part 1)
- Completion of a national exam provided by the College of Family Physicians of Canada
- Continuing medical education and professional development are required throughout your career

Qualifications

Physician is a regulated profession in British Columbia

Registration with the **College of Physicians & Surgeons of British Columbia (CPSBC)** is mandatory to work as a Physician in BC.

- **College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia (CPSBC)**
<https://www.cpsbc.ca/>

Information about licensing and registration requirements:

- **CPSBC Registration & Licensing**
<https://www.cpsbc.ca/registrants/current-registrants/registration-and-licensing>
- **Medical Council of Canada Examinations**
<https://mcc.ca/examinations/>
- **College of Family Physicians of Canada Examination**
<https://www.cfpc.ca/en/education-professional-development/examinations-and-certification/certification-examination-in-family-medicine>

International Medical Graduates (IMG)

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia welcomes applications from physicians who have obtained their medical degree from a medical school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools which include the Canadian sponsor note (<https://www.wdoms.org/>)

International medical graduates (IMGs) are often registered in the **provisional class** as an interim step so that you can apply your knowledge and skill while under supervision. To advance to the full register, a registrant in the provisional class must complete Canadian qualifying exams or be eligible to participate in a comprehensive workplace assessment within a specified period of time.

IMGs who are not eligible for full or provisional registration, but who wish to enter a postgraduate training program in British Columbia, may apply to be registered as a **clinical observer** which can improve the likelihood of acceptance into a Canadian residency program. This licence allows you to obtain educational experience in Canada by permitting you to observe and learn in a practice setting under another physician's direct supervision. Registrants in this class are not eligible for independent practice.

IMGs whose postgraduate training was not obtained in a jurisdiction acceptable to the College of Family Physicians of Canada may apply to the **assessment class**. This permits qualified and selected family physicians to participate in the **Practice Ready Assessment – British Columbia (PRA-BC) program** prior to being considered eligible for provisional registration.

More information:

- **International Medical Graduates (IMG) Information. CPSBC**
<https://www.cpsbc.ca/registrants/current-registrants/registration-and-licensing/international-medical-graduates>
- **IMG, Provisional Licence**
<https://www.cpsbc.ca/registrants/current-registrants/registration-and-licensing/img/provisional>

3. Finding Jobs

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, as well as through professional associations' publications.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in *The Province* on Sundays.

Online Job Postings

- **BC's Provincial Health Authorities**
BC's health authorities provide health services in all BC regions
 - **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority**
<https://careers.vch.ca/>
 - **Fraser Health Authority**
<https://jobs.fraserhealth.ca/jobs>
 - **Interior Health Authority**
<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/careers/Pages/default.aspx>
 - **Northern Health Authority**
<https://careers.northernhealth.ca/>
 - **Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)**
<http://www.phsa.ca/careers>
 - **Island Health Authority**
<https://www.islandhealth.ca/careers>
- **First Nations Health Authority**
<https://www.fnha.ca/about/work-with-us>
- **BC Health Careers**
<https://www.bchealthcareers.ca/>
- **Indeed.ca**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

Professional Associations' Career Resources

- **BC Family Doctors – Locums and Jobs**
<https://bcfamilydocs.ca/change-starts-here/physician-medical-home/locums/>
- **Locum Postings – Locums for Rural BC**
<https://www.locumruralbc.ca/>

Identifying the Right Position

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

For physicians, look for these related job titles (from NOC):

- family physician
- general practitioner (GP)
- medical doctor
- resident, general practice

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of employers who work in the healthcare sector in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Directory of Canadian Healthcare Personnel**
Available at the Central Library, 362.11025 C21a
- **Guide to Canadian Health Care Facilities**
Available at the Central Library, 362.105 C212ca

- **Reference Canada**

<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "*physicians*" or "*hospitals*" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library

4. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume or curriculum vitae and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following guides which are available in print at the Central Library or online at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>.

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>
- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>
- **Networking for Employment**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/learn-more-about-working-in-bc-and-canada>

5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

Industry Associations

Associations for physicians in BC and Canada provide information and assistance. Registration and fees may be required for membership.

- **Doctors of BC**
<https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/>
- **Practice in BC**
<https://practiceinbc.ca/>
- **BC College of Family Physicians**
<https://bccfp.bc.ca/>
- **College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)**
<https://www.cfpc.ca/en/home>
- **College of Physicians & Surgeons of British Columbia (CPSBC)**
<https://www.cpsbc.ca/>
- **Locums for Rural BC**
<https://www.locumsruralbc.ca/>

Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession.

Examples at the Central Library:

- **BC Medical Journal**

Available at the Central Library 610.5 B86 and online at:

<https://www.bcmj.org/>

- **Canadian Family Physician**

Available at the Central Library 610.69505 C21 and online at:

<https://www.cfp.ca/>

***Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Branch,
Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.***

*Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the
Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic>.*

