

A stylized graphic of a mountain range in shades of grey and blue. Five orange lines radiate upwards from the peaks, representing sun rays.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

A study of Rural Alberta Communities'
Success Strategies in Attracting and Retaining
Health Professionals
(2019)

**ATTRACTION AND RETENTION FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE
COMMUNITY ACTION**

The logo for Alberta's Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RHPAP). It features a stylized mountain range in light blue with a black sun icon in the center. Below the mountains, the letters 'RHPAP' are written in a large, bold, black font. Underneath, the full name 'Alberta's Rural Health Professions Action Plan' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

RHPAP
Alberta's Rural Health
Professions Action Plan

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Attraction & Retention Framework to Guide Community Action

Attracting and retaining health professionals to rural areas is a complex undertaking that requires thoughtful short- and long-term strategies. This framework, developed by Cameron, Este & Worthington, 2012, and refined through RhPAP's study, highlights three domains that require attention when developing these strategies:

- The **community** domain covers community and health-care infrastructure, the socio-political environment, and the connections a community can forge with health professionals.
- The **professional** domain contains factors that influence how well professionals integrate into the existing team and factors that affect work-life balance and work satisfaction.
- The **personal** domain includes factors such as support for the spouse/partner and family within the community, fit of the health professional within the community, and the personal characteristics of the health professional.

This framework (Figure 1 and Table 1) can help communities devise a comprehensive and balanced plan that targets all the domains relevant to attracting and retaining health professionals.

Figure 1. Framework for rural health professional attraction and retention factors (adapted from Cameron, Este & Worthington, 2012)



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Table 1: Summary of key attraction and retention domains and emerging themes

Factors	Sub-Factors	Themes
Community	Community infrastructure	Local schools, recreation facilities, child care, library, housing, community programming and events, outdoor opportunities
	Health-care infrastructure	Local health centre/medical facilities, equipment, clinic size, support staff, proximity to hospital, practice arrangements (e.g. turn-key ready vs. build your own)
	Socio-political environment	Health-care equipment fundraising efforts, existence of health-care support, community support for health care and health professionals
	Connections with the community	Ability to showcase community assets, opportunities to meet community members, community recognition of health professionals
Professional	Professional integration	Collaboration between all health professionals, mutual support between colleagues, professional fit
	Work-life balance	Opportunities to ensure time off, scheduling arrangements
	Work satisfaction	Scope of practice, opportunities to teach, learn, and/or do research, collaborative practice, work-life balance, practice arrangements
Family	Community integration	Outreach to newcomers, opportunities to link people and resources, opportunities to make move and adjustments easier for newcomers
	Support for partner/spouse	Jobs and volunteer opportunities for partners/spouses, family engagement in events
	Personal characteristics	Extroverted vs. introverted, mindset of newcomer
	Fit with community and rural lifestyle	Previous rural experience, community mindedness, level of affinity for the outdoors, expectations of rural life