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New Web site aims to alleviate physician workforce shortage

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In 2004, the Wisconsin Medical Society and the Wisconsin Hospital Association released “Who Will Care for Our Patients,” a report documenting the current and projected physician workforce shortage. At that time, there was a shortage of primary care physicians in rural Wisconsin and inner city Milwaukee, and general surgeons and radiologists were “critically needed in rural areas.”¹ The report also predicted that by 2015, the demand for primary care physicians would increase by an additional 13.5%, while the physician supply would lag even further.

An updated version of “Who Will Care for our Patients” will be released in the coming weeks, but it’s clear we still face a growing problem. The good news, however, is that we’re working to do something about it, both as part of our own strategic initiatives, which the Society’s Board of Directors approved at its October 11 meeting, and as a member of the Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce (WCMEW).

In mid October, WCMEW launched an aggressive physician

recruitment campaign designed to attract physicians back to Wisconsin and retain those already practicing or studying here. WCMEW’s members include the Society, the Wisconsin Hospital Association, the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, the Medical College of Wisconsin, the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative, and the Wisconsin Academy of Physician Assistants.

The cornerstone of this initiative is a new Web site, WisconsinPhysicianCareers.org, which features exclusively physician career opportunities available in Wisconsin (Figure 1). There is no charge to the Wisconsin clinics, hospitals, and academic medical centers that are able to list physician openings, and in the few weeks since its launch, more than 600 positions across 61 specialties have been posted. Of those opportunities, nearly 300 are for primary care positions—a clear reminder of the need to keep the workforce shortage issue among our top priorities. You can learn more about this new site from recent issues of *Medigram* and on the Society’s Web site, www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org, where you can also easily access a link to WisconsinPhysicianCareers.org.

We know Wisconsin is a great

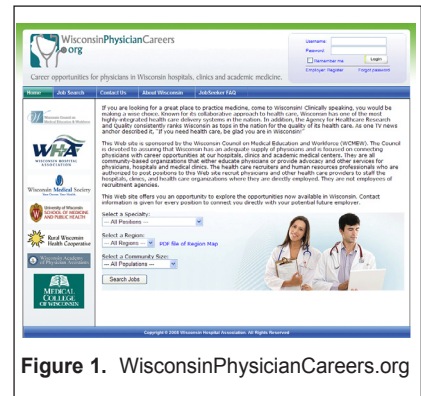


Figure 1. WisconsinPhysicianCareers.org

place to practice medicine, but because there is a limited pool of physicians nationwide, there’s a lot of competition to fill positions. That’s why it’s imperative that we do everything we can to ensure the physicians we train here stay here and that we make it easier for physicians with family or educational ties to consider coming back. I’m confident that this site will be a valuable tool in our arsenal and that as we work to implement our strategic plan, we can help ameliorate the physician workforce shortage to ensure that our patients have access to the care they need.

Reference

1. Wisconsin Medical Society, Wisconsin Hospital Association. Who Will Care for Our Patients? <http://wha.org/physicianshortage3-04.pdf>. Accessed October 31, 2008.

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