

# Letter - Doctor in the house?

By [Contributed Opinion - Gulf Islands Driftwood](#) Published: **November 18, 2011 10:00 AM**

What we have here is a local emergency. For some time, family physicians have been telling us that many of them feel overwhelmed by their workload. Rumour has it that one GP is leaving for sure and two others are considering going. Currently, there are no replacements. Faced with this exhausting scenario, the remaining GPs probably feel like running for the hills. Salt Spring needs more family physicians.

Strenuous working conditions impel GPs to seek a less demanding work environment, one with more free time to spend with their families or to simply relax. Outside of office hours and administration, GPs provide on-call service, hospital visits, attend meetings with colleagues and take time out to stay educated and up to date in emergency procedures like management of fractures, placement of chest tubes, etc. Some make house calls, no easy feat in a rural area. On top of it all, they are responsible for physician and locum recruitment.

Salt Spring's high turnover of family physicians detracts from the quality of our health care and surely discourages other physicians from exploring our islands as an attractive work environment. While I am no spokesperson for the GPs, this is my take on it.

The two most urgent issues: focus our energy and resources right now to attract excellent long-term GPs and ward off an exodus that could strand many more of us without a family physician.

So would family physicians welcome our help? If so, count me in. Could we:

- Help design and implement a social recruiting strategy, using LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube?
- Organize travel arrangements and local tours for serious candidates and set up ways to ease the newcomer's transition to the community?
- Assist with housing, recreational opportunities or offer free club memberships or other perks?
- Lobby health authorities to help finance the recruitment process?
- Headhunt candidates by posting jobs, screening candidates, scheduling and participating in interviews, completing reference checks, drafting offers, etc.

One thing for sure, GPs desperately need more boots on the ground. Let's take our doctors' advice and focus our energy where it's needed now.

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