

## Framework for Orientating an Internationally Educated Healthcare Professional (IEHP's) to Rural Alberta

### Introduction

This framework aims to provide a comprehensive orientation program for Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals (IEHPs), who will be practicing in rural Alberta. The orientation will focus on cultural adaptation, medical practice, community integration, and professional development.

### Objectives

1. **Cultural Orientation:** Familiarize IEHPs with the cultural, social, and economic aspects of rural Alberta.
2. **Medical Practice Integration:** Equip IEHPs with key contacts to share their knowledge about the healthcare system in Alberta and specific rural practices.
3. **Community Engagement:** Encourage IEHPs to engage with the local community to foster relationships and support networks.
4. **Continuous Professional Development:** Provide resources for IEHP's to explore ongoing education and resources for professional growth, such as RhPAP's PD Opportunities.

### Orientation Program Components

#### Community Integration

- **Mentorship Program:** It is suggested that, if possible, an IEHP is paired with a local community member to have one point of contact for integration purposes. This community mentor would be the main conduit for 6 months to a year for all bullets below.

#### Pre-Arrival Preparation

- **Obtain Consent** from the IEHP, for the purpose of reaching out to them for your welcoming and integration efforts. Respect if the IEHP does not provide consent and

would not like to participate in the orientation process. Each IEHP will be unique in their needs and level of participation.

- **Pre-Arrival Questionnaire** – A pre-arrival conversation is also a great way to assess when they plan to arrive in town, bearing in mind that things such as grocery stores might be closed if they plan to arrive late at night or on a Sunday. Your welcoming plan may include having a small hamper ready if they can't get to the grocery store for a few days. A Pre-Arrival Questionnaire, found in Module 6 of the toolkit ([hyperlink](#)), will help both the IEHP and the Attraction, Integration & Retention Committee in sharing pertinent information prior to the IEHP's arrival. Working closely with the Physician Resource Planners in your area for this process is key.
- **Information Packages:** Send IEHPs a welcome package including:
  - Overview of Alberta's healthcare system, which can be found in [Module 1 of RhPAP's toolkit](#).
  - The landscape of the community they are going to be practicing in, such as [RhPAP's Community Profiles](#).
  - Practical information, such as the housing landscape, transportation opportunities, and schools in the area if the IEHP is coming with children. Various resources can be found in Module 6 of the toolkit ([hyperlink](#)).

## On-Site Orientation

- **Welcome Session:** It is best practice to conduct an initial welcome session to introduce IEHPs to local healthcare leaders, community champions, and potential government representatives. During this meeting, it is suggested that key community resources be shared with the IEHP, and an opportunity for the IEHP to ask questions to be given to help ease their transition into the community.
- **Community Tours:** If not done during the recruitment phase, it is best practice to organize a guided community tour for the IEHP and their family that highlights the healthcare facilities, local amenities, cultural landmarks and community centers (to name a few). How to organize a community tour can be found in [Module 6 of the toolkit](#).

## Community Engagement

- **Volunteer Opportunities:** The best way to help integrate an IEHP and their family into a rural community is to get them involved! Encouraging IEHP's to participate in local events such as health fairs, school presentations, sports and cultural events provides a lasting impact for the IEHP, their family, as well as the community. Potential ideas on how to approach this work can be found in [Module 6](#) of the toolkit.

## Continuous Professional Development

- **Access to Resources:** It is imperative to provide IEHPs with the tools they need that are appropriate to put their best foot forward practicing in rural Alberta with CME continuing education (CME) opportunities. Providing information on continuing CME such as [RhPAP's CME opportunities](#), plus community or region-specific information is a great starting point for them to explore any development opportunities they are interested in.

## Evaluation of the Program

- **Check In's:** Conduct check ins at various stages of the orientation to assess:
  - Satisfaction with the orientation process.
  - Areas for improvement.
- **Follow-Up Meetings:** Schedule follow-up meetings after 3, 6, and 12 months to evaluate:
  - Integration into the community.
  - Professional development progress.

## Conclusion

This framework aims to provide a structured and supportive orientation for IEHPs in rural Alberta, facilitating their successful integration into both the healthcare system and the community. By focusing on cultural adaptation, community mentorship & engagement, and continuous professional development, IEHPs will be better equipped to thrive in their new environment.