

**For Immediate Release:
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**SMALL NORTH DAKOTA TOWNS WITH NO FULL-TIME DOCTOR
SELECTED FOR PRO BONO PHYSICIAN SEARCH**

National Search Firm Merritt Hawkins to Seek “Needle in a Haystack”

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IRVING, TEXAS -- After reviewing applications from around the country, Merritt Hawkins, a national physician search firm and a company of AMN Healthcare, has selected two small towns in rural eastern North Dakota as recipients of its 2011/12 Pro Bono Physician Search Program.

Under this unique program, Merritt Hawkins commits to finding a physician for a medically underserved area on a pro bono basis, waiving its customary fees. The program is intended both to bring needed medical care to an underserved area and to highlight the difficulty thousands of communities nationwide are experiencing attracting new physicians in an era of doctor shortages.

“For many rural and inner city communities today, recruiting a physician is like finding a needle in a haystack,” notes Mark Smith, president of Merritt Hawkins. “We hope to solve this problem for at least one community while shedding light on a wider challenge.”

Northwood and Larimore, North Dakota, the two communities selected for the pro bono program, have a combined population of about 2,000 people, according to Smith. They are served by Northwood Deaconess Health Center and Valley Community Health Centers, two facilities which also provide care for a regional population of about 20,000. Due to the loss of one physician and the semi-retirement of another, only one part-time doctor is now resident in the two communities. Without a full-time physician on-site, the local hospital, which is the largest employer in the two towns, cannot remain financially viable, jeopardizing the communities as a whole.

“There is a domino effect which takes place when small towns lose medical services,” states Sharon Ericson, chief executive officer of Valley Community Health Centers. “Without a doctor in town, it’s hard to attract new families and new businesses. As health care goes, so goes the community.”

Merritt Hawkins will conduct a full service physician search, assisting the two health centers in creating a recruiting plan, consulting on incentives, sourcing and screening candidates, and bringing the process to a close.

“Our goal is to find a physician who fits these two communities and who will be the mainstay of healthcare services for years to come,” Smith observes. “It is going to be a challenge, but we believe the right doctor is out there.”

For additional information about Merritt Hawkins Pro Bono Physician Search Program visit www.merrithawkins.com.

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About Merritt Hawkins

Merritt Hawkins is the leading physician search and consulting firm in the United States, and is a company of AMN Healthcare (NYSE: AHS) the nation’s largest health care staffing organization.

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