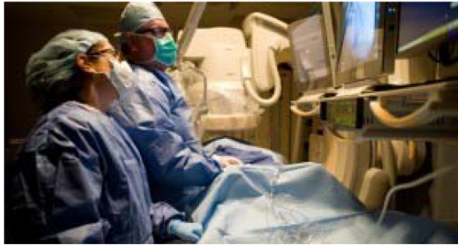


Study says Idaho is the best place to be a doctor

By: Anne Wallace Allen October 9, 2015



Health providers at West Valley Hospital in Caldwell. Photo by Patrick Sweeney.

Physicians Practice, an online and print publication for physicians and practice management professionals, has selected Idaho as the best place to be a doctor.

The group's study identified other top states as Nevada, Georgia, Texas and Utah. It chose Idaho as No. 1 for its low rate of physician density and its low cost of living.

"Idaho is indeed the Gem State," the group wrote in its report. "It also boasts few physician disciplinary actions and a low tax burden, making it easy for a physician to thrive.

"The physicians we spoke to also told us that, in the West, there is a certain attitude, a slower pace of life that imbues their communities with friendliness and appreciation for each other," said the authors of the study.

Physicians Practice is owned by the marketing and communications company UBM Medica US, of Norwalk, Conn.

The publication noted that the low physician density means there is also a shortage of doctors, most deeply felt in the medical specialties. It quoted osteopath Brandon Mickelsen, who moved from Maine to practice family medicine in Pocatello.

"... The physician salaries are lower in Idaho as a general rule, and so oftentimes, people look at that and think 'Oh, I don't want to go to Idaho because I'll make less.'" Mickelson said in the study. "But ... [I am] often pointing out that the cost of living is dramatically different. For me, the house that I've purchased here in Pocatello would be two or three times as much if I were still living in Maine."

The lowest-ranked states in the study were New York, Maryland, Hawaii, California, and Massachusetts. The authors noted that their analysis does not account for the advantage of living in those states, such as proximity to cultural events, professional sports teams, fine dining, and other aspects of urban living.

"However, these states generally had higher physician density, greater tax burdens, higher cost of living, and greater malpractice payouts; all factors which make it more expensive to run a practice," they wrote.

"It's not surprising that three of our 'best states to practice' hail from the western region of the United States," said Gabriel Perna, managing editor for Physicians Practice in a prepared statement. "The relaxed attitude, low tax burdens and slower pace of life make those ideal communities for practicing medicine."

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