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## Invitation: To Our Town

Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds

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## Invitation: To Our Town

HEAVILY populated areas of the country apparently do not provide the answer to all the ambitions of some of our Catholic physicians to serve the sick. Approached by one of the Federation Board members in the East who is acquainted with the situation, The Catholic Hospital Association was asked to investigate the opportunities available in smaller communities where Catholic doctors are needed. A group survey was made of the Catholic hospitals in the States of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, and Kansas. Questionnaires returned indicated the greatest need for general practitioners. Pediatrics came second in total of requests, followed by general surgery. Obstetrics need assistance and pathologists are in demand. In the field of psychiatry help is sought and internists are needed too. Opportunities for specialists are numerous.

Letters defined needs. From a Pennsylvania hospital one administrator wrote, "We have a vacancy in pathology and would appreciate getting a good Catholic pathologist. Do you know of one available? From Ohio came the following: "We are opening another 250 bed hospital and are urgently in need of a neurosurgeon and an ophthalmologist." An Illinois hospital reports an urgent need—"Pediatrics—we need a pediatrician badly." Another states, "We do not have any Catholic doctors

here and I think this would be a very good opportunity for one who desires to locate in a small town." Still another administrator writes, "Two of the doctors on our staff are aging; thus making a possible opportunity for younger doctors to come into the community."

From the State of Iowa comes this letter: "Dr. ...., general surgeon who has his boards in surgery is anxious for a good man in general practice or specialized in internal medicine or obstetrics to join him in office practice." Another letter reads: "In our new wing we have a fine 30-40 bed psychiatric department and the psychiatrists (two in number) here are not Catholic. If you could direct any Catholic psychiatrists this way we would be so happy."

Kansas sent the most requests. "Have new 73 bed hospital and need larger staff," writes one administrator. "Orthopedist is badly needed here," writes another. From a small community the following was received: "Ours is but a 30 bed hospital. The town has a population of about 2,200. It is in an agricultural district. There are several small towns within a radius of 15 or 20 miles, that are served by our doctors. Our hospital has been in operation three years, but is quite well established." A plea from another area reads: "We are in dire need of a young Catholic general practitioner who will do obstetrics. We have a fully

equipped 100 bed general hospital. Large Catholic population. Income unlimited." "This is a 24 bed hospital," writes another administrator, "and we have only one doctor who is looking for an associate."

Even business men, public spirited and interested in hospitals and their staffs, responded to the questionnaire after discussing the matter with administrators. From a thriving mid-western town came this letter. "There is a nice location available in a fast growing suburban area suitable for two young doctors and a dentist. One doctor is now practicing in the area. We would remodel as desired at no cost to the tenant, and help with the lease on a deferment plan. If you know of any doctors who would like a good location, we would appreciate your reference."

As evidence of community interest, here follows a letter from a hospital board member who apparently would do much for some young physician who would consider establishing his practice in Kansas.

Your letter to Administrators of Catholic hospitals in the middle west regarding Catholic doctors has been brought to my attention, by the Superior of our local hospital. I am secretary-treasurer of our county hospital board and we have the hospital leased to the Sisters for operation. Only yesterday the chairman of our board and myself called at the hospital and talked with Sister Administrator about the availability of a doctor to come and locate here; today Sister called me and advised of the letter you had written.

I would like to give you some history of our community and the opportunity that awaits a young Catholic doctor. This is a county-seat town of 1,750 people located in a rich wheat belt and also has a large amount of stock cattle as well as dairy cattle. The farm income is

quite diversified. Its trade territory takes in the entire county and has 6,000 people in our trade territory. We have two banks with deposits of more than \$6,000,000 and the county has more than \$10,000,000 in deposits with the banks and also an additional \$10,000,000 in government bonds. We have 875 farms in our trade area, in excess of 75% tenant owned. We have a large Catholic population. There are 700 souls in our parish and we have four other parishes in our county, three rural and one in a small town. We have a parochial school completed just two years ago. The school cost \$180,000 and is debt free. All eight grades are taught. The town has a new public high school, but we are large enough to have a Catholic high school too.

We have a new 34 bed hospital. It was built at a cost of \$400,000 and offers the latest in hospital equipment. The past year we have averaged 16 patients per day and the Sisters have been able to operate it efficiently.

However, we are very much in need of a young doctor to establish himself with us. We have two doctors at the present time. One is in his late 60's and the other is past middle age. They both enjoy a profitable practice but are both limited in service and as a consequence we lose many patients to other communities who would come here.

I have talked with interested persons and we can make funds available to the young doctor until he can get established, for it would be only a short time until he would have a very good practice. To cite a practical point, last year the doctors collected 94% of their fees, which to my knowledge is the highest rate of collection anywhere in our state.

We would be very happy to interview an interested young doctor and would be willing to defray the expense of his coming to look over our town, our church, and school and above all, our very fine hospital from which he could work. We would also help him to find an office and get located. We hope to receive an affirmative answer.

This, then, reports the results of contacting a small segment of states to ascertain opportunities available. Other states can be canvassed through the facilities of the Association on request of any physicians who might be interested in

locating in other areas. Sister Administrators are continually asking, "Where can we find Catholic doctors for our staff?" This is especially so in small but thriving towns that are growing in industry. With the influx of population, greater demands are made upon hospital service and more doctors are needed. Their desire to interest Catholic physicians is understandable.

LINACRE QUARTERLY will reserve pages to report situations available. Any physician who desires to investigate the situations reported should write to Rev. John J. Flanagan, S.J., Executive Director, The Catholic Hospital Association, 1438 South Grand Blvd., St. Louis 4, Missouri, for details regarding exact locations and persons to contact. Requirements should be stated as well as time of availability.

### **ANNUAL MEETING OF CATHOLIC PHYSICIANS**

The annual meeting for Catholic physicians will be held Wednesday, June 13, 1956. The occasion is sponsored by The Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds. All Catholic doctors are cordially invited to attend.

**The place—Sherman Hotel, Chicago**

**The time—12:30 p. m.—Luncheon**

Guest speaker will be Anthony J. J. Rourke, M.D., past president of the American Hospital Association.

**PLAN TO ATTEND!**