

Aliyah campaign addresses doctor shortage

STAFF REPORT

Nefesh B'Nefesh, the organization dedicated to revitalizing *aliyah* from the U.S., Canada and the UK, is launching a fellowship program for MDs from North America and the UK to help solve the serious shortage of doctors projected to occur in Israel over the next few years. In response to figures released by the Council for Higher Education's Planning and Budgeting Committee, suggesting that in the next ten years, Israel will experience a serious shortage of doctors, Nefesh B'Nefesh is teaming up with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption to bring an increased number

of western doctors to Israel. According to the report, due to a projected population increase — especially among the elderly — coupled with the noticeable trend of doctors leaving the medical profession, the current ratio of 3.5 physicians for every 1,000 Israelis is predicted to plummet to less than 2.5 per thousand in the next few years.

The Physician Aliyah Fellowship is now being introduced by Nefesh B'Nefesh to encourage North American and British physicians to move to Israel by providing significant grants. The grants, in the form of an initial fellowship upon arrival in Israel, and monthly supplementary income for the first two

years, total approximately \$60,000. These grants are available for doctors under the age of 40 who have completed their training in North America and the UK and are willing to practice at least nine months a year in Israel.

"Nefesh B'Nefesh recognizes the seriousness of this national need and is honored to be able to leverage our existing infrastructure to strengthen the medical community here," said Rabbi Yehoshua Fass, co-founder and executive

director of Nefesh B'Nefesh. "While currently many physicians making *aliyah* prefer to continue their practices abroad, this fellowship will enable doctors to remain in Israel and

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sustain their careers domestically.”

Support for the Physician Aliyah Fellowship has been generously made possible by Legacy Heritage Fund Limited — Keren Morasha of New York and Jerusalem, in partnership with Nefesh B'Nefesh, who have helped close to 90 doctors make Aliyah to date.

Israeli Minister of Health, Yacov Ben Yizri, stated “We welcome this vital initiative, not only because of the importance of *aliyah*, but also due to the expected shortage of doctors in Israel in the upcoming years.” He added “The Health Ministry will do all in its power to ease the absorption process and assist the doctors with their

professional integration in Israel.”

Israeli Minister of Immigrant Absorption, Minister of the Development of the Negev and Galil, MK Yacov Edery: “The standard of medicine practiced in Israel is one of the highest in the world, partly due to the 20,000 doctors who have made *aliyah* over the years. We need to continue to promote the *aliyah* of doctors from around the world and to maintain the level of medicine practiced here. The concerning shortage of doctors anticipated in the next few years compels the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption to join this initiative and allocate funds to ensure physicians’ successful absorption into the Israeli health system.”

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