

TRAVERSE LIFESTYLE · NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Relocating to Traverse City.

A Real Guide for Healthcare Professionals



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Why I think TC is a gem for healthcare professionals.

I genuinely believe Traverse City is one of the best places in the country for healthcare workers and their families — and I say that as someone who spent years practicing pediatric medicine here before making the transition to real estate. I am also married to another physician. We get it from both sides.

Here is the thing that gets me every time: you can go from being in the hospital to being on the beach in ten minutes. That is not a marketing line. That is just Tuesday in Traverse City. The access to amenities, the big style of living in a genuinely small town — that combination is rare, and it works exceptionally well for physicians, healthcare workers, and their families.

And if you have kids — as a former pediatrician, I can tell you this place is a four-season paradise for them. Swimming and sailing in summer, skiing and snowshoeing in winter, hiking and biking in between. They grow up outside here in a way that is increasingly hard to find.

Most healthcare professionals moving here have the same questions: which area is right for us, where do the kids go to school, and what does the market look like? This guide is my honest attempt to answer all of that.

Amy

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Five areas. Each one worth knowing.

Most of the healthcare professionals I work with end up in one of these five areas.

Here is what makes each one worth considering.

[Traverse City Area Map]

Replace with a Google Maps screenshot in your PDF editor

Long Lake

15 MINUTES FROM MUNSON · INLAND LAKE LIVING · FAMILY-ROOTED

Long Lake is where a lot of healthcare families land. It is about 15 minutes from the hospital, sits on a beautiful all-sports inland lake, and has a fun, vibrant lake community that is hard to find in a market this desirable. You get lake life without the Bay premium and easy access to everything TC has to offer. It just works.

- All-sports lake — pontoon, kayak, paddleboard, ice fish in winter
- Wooded lots with room and privacy
- 15 minutes to Munson Medical Center
- Fun, vibrant lake community with year-round energy

Old Mission Peninsula

IDYLLIC SCENERY · WINERIES · WATERFRONT · YEAR-ROUND COMMUNITY

Old Mission Peninsula is iconic. Nineteen miles of land between East Bay and West Bay — vineyard rows, cherry orchards, elevated ridge roads with water views in both directions, and some of the most beautiful private waterfront in Michigan. Short-term rentals are not allowed on the Peninsula, which means nearly everyone you encounter is a year-round local. It creates a genuine community in a way that is increasingly rare in desirable markets.

- Wineries, overlooks, and idyllic scenery in every direction
- Waterfront and water-access properties available at multiple price points
- No short-term rentals — 100% year-round neighbors
- Private and elevated — the forever-home address in TC

Downtown Traverse City

WALKABLE · VIBRANT · GROWING · CLOSE TO EVERYTHING

Downtown TC is growing and becoming a genuine hot spot — and for good reason. Walk to dinner, walk to the Boardman River, bike around town with your kids on the TART trail. The Open Space waterfront park puts Grand Traverse Bay within a short walk of your front door. For healthcare professionals who want to feel plugged into a real community without sacrificing access to nature, downtown delivers both.

- Boardman River trail and TART bike path — right outside
- Walk or bike to restaurants, shops, and the bay
- Growing food and culture scene — feels bigger than it is
- Lock-and-leave lifestyle for busy schedules

East Side

BASE OF OLD MISSION · CLOSE TO HOSPITAL · PRACTICAL AND CONNECTED

The east side puts you at the base of Old Mission Peninsula with easy access to both the hospital and the Bay. You get the convenience of being close to everything without living in the middle of it. Holiday Hills near Mount Holiday is a popular neighborhood with a real community feel — families who know each other, kids in the same activities, the kind of neighborhood that raises itself. Middle school and high school are close by, and you are well-positioned for wherever life takes you in TC.

- Close to Munson — minimal commute stress
- Holiday Hills near Mount Holiday — popular neighborhood feel
- East Bay access and proximity to OMP
- Middle school and high school within easy reach

West Side / Leelanau Corridor

LEELANAU PENINSULA · SAND DUNES · WINERIES · LAKE OPTIONS

Along the west side and into the Leelanau Peninsula, you get a different flavor of Northern Michigan life — closer to the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, surrounded by wineries, and with lake access on West Bay, South Lake Leelanau, and Cedar Lake. You are north of the hospital but you do not have to cross town to get there, which matters more than people realize. Larger lots, more open space, and a slightly slower pace — without sacrificing proximity.

- Closest access to Sleeping Bear Dunes
- West Bay, South Lake Leelanau, and Cedar Lake options
- Surrounded by wineries and Leelanau scenery
- North of Munson — no crossing town for the commute

More flexibility than you are probably used to.

One of the first things I tell families moving from a big city: school of choice changes everything here. Unlike most places where your address locks you into a specific school, Traverse City has open enrollment — each school holds a certain number of spots that families from other neighborhoods can also apply for. Your house does not determine where your kids go to school. That opens up a lot.

Enrollment forms typically open in February, with open houses in April. In most cases there is room — especially for families moving mid-year or over the summer. My honest recommendation: when you come visit, tour a few schools. It is often just a personal feel. You will know when it is right.

[TC Area Schools Map]

Replace with a Google Maps screenshot in your PDF editor

TCAPS — Traverse City Area Public Schools

PUBLIC · K-12 · DISTRICT-WIDE

The main public school district serving most of the TC area. Strong academics and athletics across elementary, middle, and high school. Two high schools — TC West and TC East — both well-regarded.

Old Mission Peninsula School

PUBLIC · K-8 · PENINSULA COMMUNITY

A small, tight-knit K-8 school serving the Peninsula. Beloved by OMP families for its community character. Students then feed into TC West or TC East for high school.

TC Montessori

PUBLIC SCHOOL OF CHOICE · MONTESSORI · NEAR WEST YMCA

A public Montessori school of choice near the West Side YMCA. Open to families across the area via the school of choice process. Popular with families who want a Montessori approach without private school tuition.

Leelanau Montessori

PRIVATE · MONTESSORI · LEELANAU COUNTY

A private Montessori school in Leelanau County. A strong option for families on the west side or in the Leelanau corridor who want a Montessori environment.

Pathfinder School

PUBLIC SCHOOL OF CHOICE · ALTERNATIVE · PROJECT-BASED

A project-based public school of choice with a distinctive approach to learning. Well-regarded among families who want something different from a traditional classroom model.

Children's House

PRIVATE · EARLY CHILDHOOD · MONTESSORI-INSPIRED

An early childhood program with a warm, Montessori-inspired environment. A popular choice for families with younger children getting settled in the area.

A note on school of choice

Enrollment opens each spring for the following school year. Spots fill up — especially for popular schools of choice. If you are relocating and have school-age kids, it is worth knowing the timeline early. I am happy to walk you through it.

Make your retirement home your primary home now.

Here is the play that more and more physicians are making — and it is a good one. Traverse City is exactly the kind of place people dream about retiring to. The water, the pace, the community, the outdoor life. Physicians think about it for years and then finally make the move at 65.

The smarter move is to come now.

Buy your primary home in TC while you are still practicing. Live the life now, not later. And if you want to generate income in the meantime — the short-term rental market here is one of the strongest in the Midwest. Traverse City draws visitors year-round: summer on the bay, fall wine country, winter skiing at Crystal Mountain and Shanty Creek. A well-positioned property runs at strong occupancy twelve months a year.

The physicians I have seen do this best buy early, live well, let the property work for them in the years when they are busy, and then step into retirement already home. No transition. No uprooting. Just more of the life they already built.

Why TC Works as a Long-Term Hold

- Steady appreciation in a supply-constrained market
- Four-season lifestyle with year-round demand
- Growing medical community means strong resale pool
- Quality of life that actually improves with time
- A place your kids will want to come back to

The STR Advantage

- Year-round tourism drives consistent occupancy
- Cherry Festival, Film Fest, Iceman = peak demand
- STR active losses can offset W-2 income
- Professional management available if needed
- TC nightly rates among highest in Michigan

Make your retirement home your primary home now.

LET'S TALK

Ready to find your version of life up north?

Whether you have a position lined up or you are just starting to explore — I am happy to have a real conversation. No pressure, no pitch. Just honest information from someone who made this move, knows this market, and genuinely loves this place.

I work with healthcare professionals at every stage of the process — from the first neighborhood conversation to closing day. If you have questions about any of this, reach out.

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