



President's message: Change is afoot!

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There are changes afoot in the SRPC. As I write this message, your executive is finalizing the hiring of an Executive Director. There were many highly qualified applicants for this job. This new position will add to the infrastructure of the Society and will allow us to increase the projects, policy development, CME and lobbying we carry out on behalf of rural physicians throughout Canada.

There are a number of interesting developments in the area of rural medical education, which I will highlight.

Congratulations to Dr. Jim Rourke of Goderich, Ont.! Jim has been named the Dean of Medicine at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Well done, Jim!

This past year Jim chaired a committee charged with producing a policy paper with recommendations regarding strategies that medical school admissions committees could use to increase the number of medical students who are from rural and remote communities. There are data to indicate that students from rural and remote communities are significantly under-represented in Canadian medical schools. This policy paper will be presented at the April meeting of admissions deans from medical schools across the country.

The measures the SRPC will be recommending will be one piece of a larger puzzle. The literature confirms that students from rural and remote communities in this country are much less likely to attend university than their urban and suburban counterparts and that the numbers attending are inversely proportional to the distance from an urban centre. There are many issues at the local level that our communities and their

municipal/provincial/federal governments will need to tackle to increase the numbers of rural and remote origin students who choose to attend university.

Congratulations to Dale Dewar (Saskatchewan), and Karl Stobbe and Len Kelly (Ontario) for their successful project, Care to Care. They spent 3 weeks in Kurdistan, Iraq, providing CME to local rural physicians. See their article on page 11.

A big thank you to members who organized and delivered regional CME programs in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and BC. If members in other regions are interested in planning something for their region, please let your executive know. Peter Hutten-Czapski is now busy organizing the Caribbean Rural Critical Care Course in February 2004. If it's not too late, check the Web site if you're interested.

Still on the education front, there are two other important initiatives ongoing at the moment. Karl Stobbe is spearheading this work as Chair of the Education Committee. The SRPC Education Committee is working on a template for a rural medical education unit as well as developing a list of essential skills that all residents completing their family medicine training must have. There was a very successful workshop at the Family Medicine Forum of the CPFC in Calgary in October. These initiatives will be revisited on Society Day at the SRPC Annual Rural and Remote Conference in Quebec City in April 2004. For those of you interested in rural medical education, consider attending the meeting in Quebec City.

All the best to all of you and your families for a happy and healthy 2004!