



# A historic moment – the fellowship of rural and remote medicine

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Last month the first fellowships in rural and remote medicine (FRRMS) were awarded in Halifax, NS, by the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada. It was a historic moment recognizing a combination of academic and leadership achievements.

I remember another historic moment in Roma, Queensland, in 1999 when I witnessed the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) awarding some of its first FACRRM fellows. At the time ACRRM was a grassroots organization with many prominent academics. When it became increasingly obvious that rural general practice required standards that differed from those that apply to urban centres, they became a standards setting body and provider of postgraduate training recognized by the Australian Medical Council.

Australia is a different nation, and we will have to find our own way to meet

the needs of those who aspire to practise in Canada. That said, it is also becoming increasingly obvious that it takes a certain knowledge base, skill set and mettle to be successful in rural practice.

Towns with populations of less than 10 000 account for 22.2% of Canada's population, and yet they are served by only 10.1% of physicians. All those rural physicians are special, working as skilled generalists in a system designed for subspecialists. However, our newly minted FRRMS didn't get there by just putting on a suit. A fellowship award is based on both educational and leadership merit on a point system. Those doctors who become eligible for fellowship are among the top 1% of rural doctors in the country.

Since it is the first year, we have a good number of fellows who were awarded. Congratulations to Drs. Rita Affleck, Carolyn Atkinson, Granger Avery, Ken Babey, David Beach, Gordon Brock, Garth Campbell, Abraham de Klerk, Dale Dewar, Herbert Dickieson, Charles Eckfeldt, Carl Eisener, Peter Englert, Yvon Gagnon, Bent Hougesen, David Howe, Peter Hutten-Czapski, Michael Johnston, Stuart Johnston, Mary Johnston, Beverley Karras, Diana Kelland, Len Kelly, Don Klassen, Jill Konkin, Maurice Lamarche, Trina Larsen Soles, Mary Ellen McColl, Kate Miller, Kenneth Murray, Doug Myhre, Conleth O'Maonaigh, Trudy O'Keefe, Judith Ophel, John Reaume, Anna Reid, James Rourke, Leslie Rourke, Alan Ruddiman, Yogi Sehgal, John Soles, Neal Stretch, Margaret Tromp, Patty Vann, Peter Wells, Art Wiebe and John Wootton.



Recipients of the first fellowships in rural and remote medicine.