



President's message. It is a political world

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It has become a political world. Much more now than I remember in the days of my youth. As I write this, south of our border, the president is complaining that even American judges base their decisions not on what is right but, rather, what best suits their political leanings. This from a man who wants only judges who share his opinion of what is right.

Health care as well has become even more of a political football. The recent discussions between the provinces and the federal government are a case in point. It is no longer left to the provinces to decide where the health care funds should be spent; rather, rightly or wrongly, the federal ministry directs where the provinces' share is directed. Strings attached!

In our own world of rural medicine, politics is increasing in prominence. The privileging issue in British Columbia,

the recent dispute between the government and physicians in Ontario, an increasing pressure to use "specialist" services, a belief that care is better in the big centres and, sadly, a fading interest among our urban colleagues in providing comprehensive care are cases in point. We need a loud voice to defend generalism and rural health care!

The SRPC stands alone in this niche. From its humble origins 25 years ago, it has become a nationally recognized and respected organization, but when you look at the membership roll, our numbers are meager — not quite 1200 active members at last count (not including 2600 students/residents).

We need to build our membership. I urge each of us to encourage colleagues to take up membership and enhance our influence. Judges must resist political influence, but it is time for rural docs to use theirs.

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