



President's message. Advancing rural medicine

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In 2012, only 14% of family practitioners and 3.1% of specialists served the 18% of Canadians in rural Canada.¹ The inequity in medical services provided to rural and remote populations has not improved substantially since then.

The SRPC and the College of Family Physicians of Canada hope to address this problem with the formation of a Rural Road Map (RRM) Implementation Committee, intended to improve health care access and equity for rural communities. Plans for action aimed at improving the quality of health care that rural Canadians receive close to home include:

- Advocate for accreditation standards that promote timely transfer of patients both to and from referring physicians and institutions; approach groups such as the Canadian Institute for Health Information and Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement and governments for transfer data to identify ways to improve efficiency and patient outcomes.
- Request a meeting with the National Liberal Rural Caucus to share the RRM and discuss a national rural health care research strategy; promote rural/remote medical training programs such as the Nunavut Family Medicine Residency Program involving Memorial University and the government of Nunavut.
- In collaboration with Infection Prevention and Control Canada, with an invitation to the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association, consider

a meeting with the federal Liberal Indigenous Caucus to discuss initiatives to further educate medical students and residents about health and social issues facing the Indigenous population and culturally safe care (outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report).

- Enhance the SRPC Rural Collaborative Research group with an invitation to others interested in rural research to meet at the Rural and Remote Medicine Course in April. Rural research initiatives illustrating the importance of research and how it can assist governments in forming policies that will address gaps in access to services in rural/remote communities will be presented to the Rural Caucus. Dialogue to explore funding opportunities will also occur.
- Approach the federal Committee on Health Workforce to emphasize the importance of medical education and of leveraging the RRM as part of their health human resource planning in the rural environment.
- Use the RRM at all available opportunities to stimulate conversation about ways to further promote rural health care for Canadians.

Our conversation is just beginning. We need support and participation from each of you!

REFERENCE

1. Supply, distribution and migration of Canadian physicians, 2012. Ottawa: Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI); 2013.

Society of Rural Physicians of Canada

Société de la médecine rurale du Canada

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