



Society of Rural Physicians of Canada Soci t  de la m decine rurale du Canada

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News Release

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CALL FOR ACCESS TO RURAL HEALTH CARE CLOSE TO HOME

OTTAWA – As we are weeks away from a federal election, the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada (SRPC) is calling on all politicians to answer to rural and Indigenous populations to making access to health care close to home a priority for Canadians living in rural communities.

“Rural communities are essential to Canada’s economy and quality of life,” said SRPC President Dr. Margaret Tromp. Despite the universality and accessibility principles of the Canada Health Act, people who live in rural and remote communities do not have equitable access to health care services. A recent Ipsos poll, commissioned by the College of Family Physicians of Canada, revealed that health care tops the list of issues for this year’s federal election, with 50 per cent Canadians ranking it among their top three¹

“Rural communities need an effective health care system with a stable workforce. Rural communities need rural-based solutions that works in addressing their unique health care needs. These issues need to be part of a national dialogue in this year’s election” says Dr. Tromp.

Key next steps are to continue the conversation that address the concerns of rural Canadians to uncover:

- How to enhance access to care for rural Canada through a comprehensive rural health care strategy.
- Rural health and health care are important economic drivers for rural communities.
- Rural health care innovation such as the new broadband investments is needed to address the underperforming rural health care system.
- Any national rural economic strategy needs to address the rural Canadians’ health concerns.
- Rural community engagement and collaborative partnerships in developing rural health care solutions.
- Recognizing rural realities in planning national initiatives, from health system resource planning, stable health workforce, infrastructure and listening to rural Canadians.

According to Dr. Tromp, “An opportunity exists to narrow health disparities by providing safe and effective care closer to home.” People in rural areas have a higher burden of illness, reduced life expectancy, and are often older, poorer, and sicker than urban populations. When rural communities are healthy, they can fully contribute to Canada’s economy. “We have heard stories from rural Canadians about being denied access to health care.” She further stated that “...we urge all politicians, stakeholders and rural communities to make rural health care a priority. Rural and Indigenous health populations deserve more attention to achieve equitable outcomes. The time to act is now. We’re looking for concrete commitments from every politician especially in rural Canada to work towards collaborative rural-based solutions.”

For more information: SRPC Administration Office
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¹ College of Family Physicians of Canada. *Ipsos survey shows health care is a top priority in the 2019 federal election* [information release]. Mississauga, ON: College of Family Physicians of Canada; 2019. Available from: www.cfpc.ca/uploadedFiles/Publications/News_Releases/News_Items/Ipsos-survey-2019-federal-election-FINAL.pdf. Accessed 2019 Jul 30.