

October 15, 2025

Subject: Urgent Action Required: Improving Inter-Provincial Physician Mobility to Safeguard Rural Healthcare Access

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada (SRPC), we want to extend our best wishes as you convene in Calgary, AB on October 16th and 17th, 2025, for the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Health Ministers Meeting. The SRPC represents over 3,000 members who serve Canada's rural, remote and Indigenous communities, and our primary concern remains the provision of timely, high-quality care to rural patients. It is in this spirit that we urge you to place physician mobility and licensure reform at the forefront of your discussions.

The crisis in healthcare access, particularly in rural, remote and Indigenous regions, is exacerbated by archaic and inconsistent provincial and territorial licensing requirements. These barriers severely restrict the ability of fully qualified Canadian physicians to move, respond to immediate needs, or easily participate in locum programs across jurisdictions. This inertia means that gaps in coverage persist unnecessarily, directly impacting patient health outcomes and overburdening existing local staff. We recognize and commend the federal government's recent efforts, such as the tabling of Bill C-5, which aims to break down interprovincial trade and labour barriers. However, as this bill primarily addresses federally regulated occupations, professions like medicine, which are provincially regulated, require decisive action from provincial and territorial governments. The spirit of Bill C-5 - to foster seamless movement of professionals - must be extended to healthcare, where the benefit to public good is arguably most critical.

Your meeting at the end of this week presents a unique and timely opportunity to collectively address this internal obstacle. We strongly urge all provincial and territorial health ministers to commit to establishing a true pan-Canadian physician licensing framework. Whether through mutual recognition, a single national licence, or a streamlined, standardized application process, the goal must be the complete elimination of redundant administrative burdens for physicians seeking to practice across provincial and territorial lines. Implementing this solution is not merely a bureaucratic reform; it is a vital step toward stabilizing and rural-proofing healthcare delivery nationwide.

The time for incremental change has passed. We ask that you leverage this crucial meeting to commit to a clear timeline and actionable plan for achieving full physician mobility. Doing so will immediately

expand the available physician workforce, enhance physician recruitment and retention, and ultimately improve the health and well-being of all Canadians, particularly those in underserved communities. Thank you for your leadership and urgent attention to this matter. We look forward to seeing the significant commitments made from your meeting.

Sincerely,



Dr. Gavin Parker
SRPC President



Jennifer Barr
Chief Operating Officer