



28 January 2011

Feature Story



This is RPAP Now!

It's been a long time in the works, but RPAP Now is headed to an inbox near you.

RPAP Now, a publication of the [Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan](#), will be published twice monthly and will highlight our ongoing efforts to attract, educate and retain rural Alberta physicians.

There have been some big changes within RPAP lately, and many more are on the way. The RPAP Board met recently and a number of new ideas have come forward. Keep an eye on RPAP Now for details on new initiatives, program changes and success stories from across the province.

If you have ideas suggestions for future issues, or ideas on how we can make this publication more effective, please contact our new Communications Coordinator, Jonathan Koch (pronounced 'cook'), at jonathan.koch@rpap.ab.ca.

Thanks for reading RPAP Now!

Highlights

Current Alberta Physician Link Stats @ January 28, 2011

Active Jobs - 173
Job Seekers - 2552
Job Searches - 67624
New Postings - 57

Rural Physician numbers on the rise

As of December 31, 2010, Alberta boasted 1,814 rural physicians, up 12 from the previous month's totals. Of these newcomers, six are brand new to Alberta, while six others have returned.

Virtual Library usership on the way

The number of registered users of the RPAP-funded [Virtual Library website](#) continues to rise. Just under 100 users registered in 2010, bringing the grand total to 1311 users by the end of the year. With only about half of that total being active users, we encourage new members to activate their accounts so they may take advantage of the

Thank you Preceptors!

Thank you to the Alberta physicians who acted as preceptors in 2010 for RPAP medical school shadowing experiences and summer externship experiences, and for the clerkship and Residency training provided in conjunction with both Faculties of Medicine.

Thanks to RPAP's Shadowing Program for first and second year medical students a total of 131 shadows took place up until December 2010, 32 at the University of Alberta (U of A) and 98 at the University of Calgary (U of C). An additional 14 shadows were booked until the end of December 2010, nine of which were at the University of Alberta.

Recruitment and Retention efforts adopt more 'attractive' title

It's a small change for a big reason.

Starting immediately, RPAP activities in the area of physician recruitment and retention will be referred to as "attraction and retention". According to Executive Director, David Kay, the activities of RPAP won't change, but how we refer to them will.

"The term 'recruitment and retention' as we used it working with communities wasn't accurate as communities do not recruit physicians: physician clinics, Alberta Health Services and Covenant Health do. The new title reflects the true mandate of these individual committees, which is to provide an attractive location for physicians and their families to locate to, to work with the existing physicians, AHS and Covenant Health, and to keep physicians there once they've arrived."

The term "attraction and retention" was initially adopted by the Olds Recruitment and Retention Committee late last year. The RPAP Alberta Rural Community Recruitment

"Virtual Library" content, which is limited to physicians practicing in rural Alberta communities.

Check out these RPAP web sites

- RPAP main web site: www.RPAP.ab.ca
- The Alberta Rural Family Medicine Network: www.ARFMN.ab.ca
- Rural Medical Interest Groups at UofC and UofA: <http://www.rpap.ab.ca/ruralinterestgroup.html>
- Alberta Physician Link provincial recruitment web site: www.AlbertaPhysicianLink.ab.ca
- The RPAP Virtual Library: www.VLibrary.ab.ca
- The RPAP PracticalProf preceptor development web site: www.PracticalProf.ab.ca
- Preparing for a career as a rural physician: www.rpap.ab.ca/ify/career.html
- RPAP's upcoming web site to support community recruitment and retention: www.AlbertaRuralHealth.ab.ca

and Retention Award, which is co-sponsored by the Alberta Chamber of Commerce, will also be re-named the RPAP Alberta Rural Community "Attraction and Retention Award" effective 2011.

Skills Days are Underway

Preparation for 2011 Rural Tours and Skills Days is well underway. RPAP is currently working with the Rural Medicine Interest Group (RMIG) at the U of C for Skills Days in May and June. Skills Day preparation is underway with Brooks for May 21 and Consort/ Oyen for June 11.

Hinton was host to 50 U of A students on December 4 who took part in an RPAP Skills Day in the community through the U of A RMIG. [Plans are also in place for a second skills day in Cold Lake on March 12, 2011.](#) The Cold Lake Skills Day will be an overnighter and students will be housed at the base for a very minimal cost.

Skills Days were developed by RPAP to create an opportunity for first and second year medical students to visit a rural community, see a rural hospital, and experience the team work that exists in rural centers. Students also experience the practice and lifestyle of Rural Physicians while learning new skills along the way.

Smoky River heralds arrival of new physician

The residents of the Smoky River region (Fahler/ McLennan/ M.D. of Smoky River) have started the New Year off on a positive thanks to the recent arrival of Dr. Simon Eriki to the area.

The Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan assisted the community in their successful recruitment, providing a grant to furnish temporary housing for the new doctor. Kevin Laliberte writes in the January 5, 2011 edition of the Smoky River Express that a new bedroom suite was purchased along with all the trimmings for the bed. Additional donations including large furniture items, kitchen accessories, Christmas decorations and much more came from the community at large as well as hospital staff.

Housing for physician recruits was purchased with donated funds, with additional support to be provided by Alberta Health Services, who will continue to support the costs and maintenance of the residence.

Enrichment Training Helps Alberta's Physicians

The RPAP Enrichment program (and its variations Emergency Medicine Enrichment, GEMS and FIRST), is intended to assist physicians in rural or regional communities to upgrade existing skills or gain new skills in order to meet the medical needs of the community or surrounding areas.

We received this letter of thanks from Dr. E. Smuts:

"I want to thank [RPAP] for the sponsorship of my fellowship in Palliative Care. ...I will be starting to work as a palliative care physician in Lethbridge and surrounding rural areas... It would not have been possible without the help of RPAP and I appreciate your assistance".

About RPAP

The Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan is unique in Canada – it is a not-for-profit, integrated and comprehensive, rural health workforce agency funded by Alberta Health and Wellness and has three corporate members: the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, the Alberta Medical Association, and Alberta Health Services. RPAP pulls its resources together in order to benefit rural Albertans and their communities through its provincially-focused initiatives for the education, recruitment and retention of physicians for rural practice.

Upcoming events:

[Cabin Fever 2011, Delta Lodge at Kananaskis](#)
10-13 February 2011

[2011 Alberta Medical Students Conference and Retreat \(AMSCAR\)](#)
February 4-5, 2011 Banff

[ECG Interpretation for family physicians and other health care providers](#)
February 25 & 26, 2011, University of Calgary