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Subject: RPAP Hotsheet - December 2002 Issue



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1. **General Emergency Medicine Skills** for Rural Physicians (GEMS) Update

A year ago at the Banff Annual Emergency Medicine for Rural Hospitals conference, RPAP floated the idea of developing a professional development program for Family Physicians - **General Emergency Medicine Skills for Rural Physicians (GEMS)**.

Based on the positive response, a group of medical professionals represented provincially have come together under the auspices of the RPAP to develop the didactic aspect of the Program's content. The following multi-

media CD ROM modules are being developed: C spine/CT and head injury; acute coronary syndromes; preparing the patient for transport; Airway Management and RSI (rapid sequence induction); and Advanced Vascular Access Skills. The practice component, it is planned, will be acquired through the use of the Human Patient Simulator (HPS).

GEMS is being designed to provide professional development for rural physicians who practice emergency medicine and who are challenged to develop and maintain their skills. In addition, it is hoped that GEMS will assist with physician retention in rural communities.

A demonstration of the unique and innovative multi-media modules under development will occur on Saturday, 18 January 2003 at the Banff Annual Emergency Medicine for Rural Hospitals conference. We are aiming to release the full GEMS program by July 2003.

More information may be obtained by contacting Monica Kohlhammer, Rural Physician Consultant, South, at (403) 283-1480, Fax: (403) 283-8817 or E-mail: mkohlhammer@hss-associates.com

2. New 2001-2002 RPAP Annual Report Available

The first Annual Report of the Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan (RPAP) covering the period 2001-2002 is now available.

For a copy please contact Janice Drinkill, RPAP Program Support Coordinator, 1-866-423-9911, Fax: (780) 423-9917, E-mail: RPAP-Information@rpap.ab.ca

3. New RPAP WONCA Travel Grants

The RPAP will provide a limited number of travel/expense grants of up to \$5,000 each in support of the **SIXTH WONCA WORLD CONFERENCE ON RURAL HEALTH, 24-27 September 2003, Santiago de Compostela, Spain**

These grants are open to Alberta medical students, family medicine residents and others (e.g. rural physicians, rural preceptors/ faculty and RPAP associates) who have papers/posters accepted for presentation at the Conference.

The grants are intended to cover travel, accommodation and registration costs associated with the Conference.

For more information check the RPAP website at www.rpap.ab.ca or contact David Kay, RPAP Program Manager, 1-866-423-9911, Fax: (780) 423-9917, E-mail: Alberta-RPAP@rpap.ab.ca

4. Changes in store for the 2003 RPAP Recruitment Fairs

The RPAP Recruitment Fairs began in 1993 and have developed and evolved in sophistication each year. Their importance and value have been documented in a 2002 research finding and in participant, medical student and Resident evaluation responses.

However, based on respondent feedback, we are going to make some changes for the 2003 Fairs. The UofC Fair will be held on Thursday, 18 September 2003 at the Health Sciences Centre. It will continue its successful format.

The UofA Fair will change to an open house to be held from 4:30-6:30 p.m. on Sunday, 16 March 2003 at the

Westin Hotel, Edmonton. The open house will occur just prior to the opening of the annual Provincial Health Authorities of Alberta (PHAA) Forum that Sunday. RHAs may want to consider structured follow-up steps to this RPAP open house, including having contact information available and invitations to the RHA's hospitality suite.

Further information will be sent to each RHA as the planning details are confirmed.

For more information please contact Janice Drinkill, RPAP Program Support Coordinator, 1-866-423-9911, Fax: (780) 423-9917, E-mail: RPAP-Information@rpap.ab.ca

5. A Reminder to Consider the RPAP Rural Physician Retention/ Innovation Grant Program

Rural physicians and RHAs are reminded to consider applying for a Rural Physician Retention/Innovation Grant. The purposes of the Rural Physician Innovation and Retention Grant Program are to foster the development of innovative program ideas for the benefit of rural physicians, or project ideas for physician retention targeted at the local level.

The grants are intended to provide one-time funding for a short-term project or seed funding for a long-term project.

For more information on the Rural Physician Retention/Innovation Grant Program or the updated Recruitment Expense Reimbursement Program check the RPAP website at www.rpap.ab.ca or contact David Kay, RPAP Program Manager at 1-866-423-9911, Fax: (780) 423-9917 or E-mail: Alberta-RPAP@rpap.ab.ca

6. Physician & Family Health Promotion Pilot

The RPAP is co-funding a Physician and Family Health promotion pilot to encourage health check-ups and healthy lifestyles by rural physicians and their spouses. The pilot proposal was prepared with the RPAP, the Alberta Medical Association's Physician and Family Support Program (PFSP) and Foothills Health Consultants. The PFSP and the RPAP are sharing the costs associated with the 20 rural physician participants in the pilot, and in addition the RPAP will fund the participation of the families.

Feedback from Alberta physicians and spouses indicates that many do not have a family physician of their own, do not have regular health check-ups, and often delay diagnosis and treatment of their own conditions longer than the general population. Examples of physician health promotion programs were obtained from the WONCA Rural Health conference in Australia, 2002.

We will keep you informed as to the progress of this pilot. More information may be obtained by contacting Monica Kohlhammer, Rural Physician Consultant, South, at (403) 283-1480, Fax: (403) 283-8817 or E-mail: mkohlhammer@hss-associates.com

7. Orientation of Newcomers

As a next step to the RPAP's new *Orientation Guide to Medical Practice and Life in Rural Alberta*, the RPAP will be telephoning all new rural physicians to Alberta since January 2002. The purpose is to ensure they are aware of RPAP services, determine if any additional supports are required, and obtain spousal contact information.

Consultant Nancy Rowan will be conducting these calls during December and January, to catch up on the year's newcomers; the Rural Physician Consultants – North and South will carry on monthly later in 2003.

A reminder that the complete information from the companion Recruiting and Immigration Steps for IMGs brochure is available on the RPAP web site at www.rpap.ab.ca under Support for Regional Health Authorities.

8. Community Toolkit for Physician Recruitment & Retention

The RPAP has gathered a multi-stakeholder team to begin developing a Community Toolkit for Physician Recruitment and Retention. This Toolkit will help community stakeholders recognize what they can do in collaboration with physicians and RHAs, to plan and implement successful physician recruitment and retention strategies. Federal and provincial representatives are involved.

Also, we are seeking examples of best practices: communities that have handled aspects of the issue particularly well. We have many examples through the *Pockets of Good News Update 2002*, but welcome any suggestions you may have. If you wish to let us know of your success stories, please provide contact information as well as a brief notation of the community's accomplishments. We hope to have the Toolkit ready for piloting by April 2003.

We will keep you informed as to the progress of this project. More information may be obtained by contacting Leah Lechelt, Rural Physician Consultant, North, at (780) 432-2829, Fax: (780) 436-2781 or E-mail: RPAP-Consultant@rpap.ab.ca

9. New Rural Physician Consultant, North & RPSN Administrator

Our Rural Physician Consultant, North, and Rural Physician Spousal Network Administrator Terri Taylor is taking a sabbatical throughout 2003. Her replacement, Leah Lechelt, has been oriented to the position and takes over effective 6 January 2003. Leah has considerable experience with physicians and health care through her work with the Alberta Medical Association and Alberta Mental Health Board. We welcome Leah to her new positions, and we wish Terri well during her sabbatical.

Leah Lechelt, Rural Physician Consultant, North, and RPSN Administrator, may be contacted at (780) 432-2829, Fax: (780) 436-2781 or E-mail: RPAP-Consultant@rpap.ab.ca and RPAP-Spousal@rpap.ab.ca.

10. RPAP Surfing Opportunities

Check our web site at www.rpap.ab.ca for details about Alberta's RPAP or www.arfmn.ab.ca for details about the Alberta Rural Family Medicine Network (ARFMN).

Further information and details on the RPAP and its initiatives may be obtained from:

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E-mail Alberta-RPAP@rpap.ab.ca, Phone Toll Free 1-866-423-9911, Fax (780) 423-9917.

Tell us what you think about this Hotsheet or the RPAP in general.

