



Hotsheet

The Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan

March 2006 Issue

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Input Invited on RPAP's Future Role

Your input is invited on four important policy questions associated with the future role and strategic direction of **The Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan**. An extensive evaluation of RPAP was completed in August 2005 and the RPAP Board is now seeking additional input in these four areas.

RPAP has engaged Judy Wry of Wry Consulting Corp. to conduct stakeholder consultations. Your responses are requested to the following questions - Should RPAP: have a direct recruitment role; focus on smaller rural communities; focus on learners likely to go rural; and what activities could RPAP undertake to improve retention?

Only aggregate information will be provided to RPAP to maintain the confidentiality of your response. Please go to the RPAP website to provide your feedback (www.rpap.ab.ca) and **submit your response prior to 31 March 2006**.

Early Careerist Award Event Held

Peace River was the site of a day-long celebration of Dr. Mike Kolber as RPAP's first Early Careerist Award recipient. To honour Dr. Kolber, the RPAP and Peace River and area sponsors invited the community on 26 February to Misery Mountain ski hill to ski free for the day, and to enjoy a BBQ and music by a local Celtic band.



The Mayor, MLA, Peace Country Health VP-Medical, Associate Clinic representative and RPAP's Chairman Dr. Odell Olson, spoke to Dr. Kolber's significant community contributions and commitment, his teaching of medical students

and residents, and his commitment and passion for rural practice and the rural lifestyle.

The Early Careerist Award is presented annually to recognize the significant contributions of a rural physician within their first 12 years of practice who is an example of many rural physicians early in their careers. Award recipients are innovative, energetic and passionate about rural medicine and the rural lifestyle and seen to be current or future icons in their field that are already making a difference for their clients, their community and medicine practice.

Student Recruitment Video Shot

In conjunction with the Early Careerist Award event run in Peace River, the RPAP shot a new video aimed at interesting students in careers in rural medicine. The video will follow Dr. Mike Kolber for a day to show students what a rural physician does both in a medical practice and in the community.



New Provincial Recruitment Web Site – Rural Physician Link

Introduced to the province's medical directors last month to a positive response, the RPAP is working to launch a new provincial physician recruitment web site – www.RuralPhysicianLink.ab.ca – by early April.

This new web site is designed to complement the recruitment efforts of health regions and will be a central portal for physicians looking for a position in rural Alberta. Besides providing some general information about why physicians should choose to practice in Alberta, the site will be searchable and will provide information about practice opportunities, their location, specialty, and whether a permanent position or locum. In addition the site will contain community profiles such as RPAP has now with a link to AlbertaFirst.com. Rural Physician Link will also include the ability to register so that physicians looking for practice opportunities or to do a locum can have health regions contact them.

2006 RPAP Awards

RPAP's 2006 Awards nomination campaign kicked off 1 March. TV, print, electronic and other advertising is encouraging rural Alberta citizens and rural communities to nominate physicians for the Rural Physician Early Careerist Award and the Award of Distinction. Nominations must be received by 31 March at 5:00 p.m. RPAP will co-host award events with each of the Award recipient's communities. For more information, go to the RPAP web site at www.rpap.ab.ca

Opportunity for New Partnership

A partnership with the Students Interested in the Medical Sciences (SIMS) group at the U of C offers the potential to accelerate growth of RPAP's education pipeline with pre-medicine students. SIMS has a membership of 400 – 500 students and hosts over 40 events a year. Its key operational function is as an "information broker." The goal of the organization is to link students with any resources and careers in the area of medicine.

RPAP focuses on the professional, community/lifestyle and family factors that influence health human resource recruitment and retention. It uses an "education pipeline" strategy to help recruit and retain enough physicians for rural Alberta. This education pipeline –

- starts in rural high school with outreach programs aimed at encouraging students to consider rural medical careers;

- includes undergraduate experiences in rural medicine including rural medical interest clubs, financial supports, rural shadowing experiences for 1st and 2nd year students and rural training in 3rd and 4th years;
- provides postgraduate/resident rural medical training including RPAP's rural-based Family Medicine residency program centered out of Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat;
- provides support to health regions, rural communities and physicians for their recruitment and retention of rural physicians; and
- supports retention through the development of rural preceptors and spousal/family programming.

Update on RPAP Shadowing Program

The RPAP provides opportunities for first and second year medical students to see rural physicians in practice through its Shadowing Program. By mid February:

- 98 requests from U of C students were received with 89 locations set up ; and
- 48 requests from U of A students with 46 locations set up.

A number of students have shadowed two or three times; one student has shadowed four times.

Medical Student Skills Days

Two additional skills days are currently being organized for medical students. Through collaboration with Dr. Rob Halse of Ponoka, a U of A day is planned for 8 April and Dr. Vince Elgersma is working with RPAP to plan a skills day in Brooks for U of C students on 27 May 2006.

Rural Physician Spousal Hotsheet

The latest issue of the Rural Physician Spousal Hotsheet will be forwarded to spouses in the province this month and every three-four months thereafter via email.