



**Society of Rural Physicians of Canada
Société de la médecine rurale du Canada**

Media Release

High Tuition will keep Rural students out of Medicine ON-SRP In Support of Tuition Freeze

DRYDEN, ON / APRIL 11, 2001/- The Ontario Society of Rural Physicians has come out in support of a tuition freeze for Ontario's medical Students. Dr Eisener of Dryden says, "The best hope for doctors in rural Ontario are children of rural Ontarians" Studies from Manitoba and Ontario show that rural origin students are two to three fold more likely to eventually enter rural practice than urban origin students. "In our town very few people will be able to afford a debt of \$100,000."

Recent reports are reflecting that tuition fees are preventing students of lower to middle class families from going to medical school. A University of Western Ontario survey of 330 first-year students showed that the average income of a first-year student's parents is 50% higher than three years ago. The proportion of students whose parents earn less than \$60,000 is down to 15% from 36%. Since deregulation in 1997 tuition at UWO has risen from \$4,844 to \$10,753 and may become \$14,000 this fall.

Dr Eisener goes on to state "Medical schools are not accepting a fair share of rural students, at these tuitions rural students won't even be able to apply." Rural people have lower average family incomes and going to university means higher expenses as they are unable to live at home.

Both the residents association PAIRO and the Ontario Medical Association have called for a tuition freeze so that a medical school education could remain attainable for qualified applicants regardless of social strata.

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Backgrounder

The relation between personal characteristics of physicians and practice location
Both Carter (CMAJ 1987 Feb 15;136(4):366-8) and Godwin (CMAJ 1999 April 20;160(8):1159) have found that medical students of rural origin were 2 to 3 fold more likely to practice in rural areas. These results closely parallel studies performed in the United States and Australia.

<http://www.cma.ca/cmaj/vol-160/issue-8/1159.htm>

Rural Patients are Having a Hard Time Accessing Care

Last year 26% of people outside major metropolitan areas had difficulty finding a family doctor. This was 25% higher than the provincial average and is particularly striking when one considers that other alternate sources of primary care such as paediatricians, gynaecologists, and walk in clinics, are even less available in rural areas. (Source OCFP)

Ontario Trains Few Doctors for the Size of the Population

Nationally medical school graduates peaked in number at 1,835 in the year 1985. Subsequently cutbacks have dwindled the number of medical students graduating to 1,577 in 1997. If the Ontario government increases enrolment by the suggested 160 the ratio in Ontario will only climb to one student for 15,539 population by 2005.

Population per Medical Student (source ACMC, The Lancet)

Ontario 20,200 Alberta 14,000
Canada 18,000 Australia 13,500
United States 14,700 Britain 12,000

Ontario has less physicians than other provinces or most developed countries

Physicians per 100,000 Population

Ontario..... 178
Canada..... 186
US..... 230
OECD *..... 260

*Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development

Ontario Medical Schools do not produce large numbers of rural doctors

Only 8% (168) of the 2076 graduates of Ontario medical schools from 1993 to 1998 are in rural practice. (Source CAPER)