



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

## **Media Release**

### **Rural Canada Relies on GP's for Surgical Care**

SHAWVILLE QC / April 15th, 2001/ - Rural Canadian's in four western provinces rely heavily on their GP's for surgical care. In a survey published tomorrow in the Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine, the authors found only 22 Canadian certified specialist surgeons distributed amongst all of the 76 rural surgical programs in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. Most of the rural patients requiring appendectomy or cesarean section were cared for by 128 GP's with additional training in general surgery.

"The survey data document a considerable need for the expansion of the supply of rural specialist surgeons... 23 of the rural programs without specialist surgeons believed their communities could support a specialist service"

Dr Stuart Iglesias, one of the authors, pointed out however that even with an expanded supply of specialist surgeons, there would continue to be a significant continuing need for family physicians with additional surgical training "Where specialist surgeons have located in rural Canada, they have always been supported by family physicians with extra surgical training...these GP Surgeons help carry the load, especially after hours and on call."

Communities which could draw on a population of slightly less than 25,000 were more likely to attract a specialist surgeon. Smaller communities (mean = 13,795) relied exclusively on GP Surgeons

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## **Backgrounder**

### **About the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada**

The Society of Rural Physicians of Canada (SRPC) is the national voice of Canadian rural physicians. Founded in 1992, the SRPC's mission is to provide leadership for rural physicians and to promote sustainable conditions and equitable health care for rural communities.

On behalf of its members and the Canadian public, SRPC performs a wide variety of functions, such as developing and advocating health delivery mechanisms, supporting rural doctors and communities in crisis, promoting and delivering rural medical education, encouraging and facilitating research into rural health issues, and fostering communication among rural physicians and other groups with an interest in rural health care.

The SRPC is a voluntary professional organization representing over 1,300 of Canada's rural physicians and comprising 5 regional divisions spanning the country.