



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

Media Release

Canada Needs More Medical Students from Rural Areas

SHAWVILLE QC / April 16th, 2001/ - "Rural Canada won't get its fair share of doctors until a fair share of rural students gets into medical school" says Dr Peter Hutten-Czapski, president of the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada. In a survey published today in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, the authors found only 10.8% of Canada's medical students lived in a rural area at high school graduation, compared to 22.4% of Canadians.

Studies show that growing up in a rural community is the factor most strongly associated with choosing rural medical practice. About half of rural origin students choose this career versus one in twenty urban students.

The study found Aboriginal students make up only 0.7% of medical students but who represent 4.5% of the population. Half of Aboriginal physicians in Canada are involved in Aboriginal health, and so increasing aboriginal representation in medical schools will also improve access for that special needs community.

Australia has increased the number of its rural doctors by about 1,000 since 1996 by combining strategies to increase the number of rural medical students and by making medical education rurally relevant.

The rural family doctor organisation, WONCA has been advocating for such reforms to meet the needs of the world's rural peoples

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The article "Characteristics of first-year students in Canadian medical schools" can be found on line at <http://www.cmaj.ca/>

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.