



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

## **Media Release**

### **Rural Doctors Against Fyke Hospital Closures**

WYNYARD /APRIL 17, 2001/ - The Society of Rural Physicians of Canada cautions the government from centralising hospital services to the degree recommended by the Fyke Commission. The commission has recommended closing 71% of Saskatchewan hospitals which will increase travel time to a hospital to over an hour, in good weather, for 12% of the population.

Dr Peter Hutten-Czapski, SRPC President says "Hospitals are not Wallmarts, but more like grocery stores, they deal with perishables." "Even if the distant hospital is of excellent quality, the results will not be as good for people who have to travel long distances to get to it."

Rural people should receive care close to their families and loved ones, why do they have to travel to be cared in City Hospitals by strangers? Dr Hutten-Czapski points to studies of rural obstetrics that show that women who live in communities with poor local access to obstetrical services are more likely to have babies who are premature, have prolonged hospitalizations with double the costs, or both. While there is agreement that nurses can and should do more health care, why should rural doctors be forced by hospital closures to do less of their potential and threaten the care of their patients?

A further irony is that it may cost more money to centralise. The costs per case in rural hospitals can be lower than that of larger hospitals, even before you add in the cost of the ambulance. It is notable that the last series of hospital closures in 1993 did not save any money.

Dr Hutten-Czapski says "If this exercise is not about saving money then lets build the proposed teams as Fyke suggests and only then consider how many rural hospitals are needed. We need to build the new system before we tear down the old. Rural citizens should not be subjected to more rounds of uncertainty with regards to their health care delivery."

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