



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

PRESS RELEASE - RELEASE EMBARGOED TO 0100h APRIL 29th

**McMaster Selected as Best Undergraduate
Medical School by Rural Doctors**

MONTREAL QC /April 29th, 2005/ - McMaster University has been awarded the prestigious Keith Award 2005 for the medical school that best selects and trains physicians who choose to practice in rural communities.

The award, given annually by the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada, is based on an analysis of the quality and quantity of rural physicians produced. Dr Larsen-Soles, president of the Society says "We are very proud of the achievements of McMaster University. In a time where the medical schools are producing more and more city specialists, McMaster is one of the schools that has been able to hold the line by selecting students and training doctors for where they are most needed."

The winner was selected by looking at the practice location of the alma mater of all Canadian Medical Schools in 1998 and again in 2004. Practice location was taken from the Canadian Medical Association database. Second, and third place winners, University of Ottawa and University of Manitoba, also have a strong regional social focus.

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Backgrounder

Methods and Definitions

The Society of Rural Physicians regularly tracks the number of rural doctors by analysis of the database held by the Canadian Medical Association. Rural is defined according to the strictest Statistics Canada definition of a town and surrounding built up areas under 10,000 population. By this definition Canada is 21% rural. A provincial and historic breakdown is at <http://www.srpc.ca/numbers.html>

The Keith Award, a Brief History

The Keith award was introduced to recognise the contribution of top rural practice training programs in Canada. The awards started off modestly with initial work in 1999 by Dr Peter Hutten-Czapski and Dr Kate Miller and later Dr Jill Konkin whose research is used to define the best program. While we would like to acknowledge all of the good programs, there are some that are simply outstanding, and while we must always use the touchstone of having graduates going rural as the principle scale of measurement, there are many other issues that reflect a quality rural program.

The trophy's plaque reads honours "Excellence in training for Rural Practice - Academic Leadership for meeting tomorrow's needs for rural doctors" Standing 30 cm tall the main feature is blown glass in the shape of a large light bulb, representing the leadership and vision that is being honoured. The base is made of Canadian knotty pine in a three sided pyramid. The artist states that this represents grounding the vision amongst rural infrastructure and the need for well trained rural doctors that extends throughout the land of Canada from sea to sea to sea, as well as the relationship of this land to academia from which these doctors must come.

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 two thousand of Canada's rural physicians and comprising 5 regional divisions spanning the country reference <http://www.srpc.ca>