



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

Media Release

Family Medicine North Honoured as top Rural Medicine Program in Canada

HOCKLEY VALLEY, ON /April 30th, 2001/ - Family Medicine North: NWO (Northwestern Ontario Family Medicine Residency Program), has been awarded the prestigious Keith Award for the most effective postgraduate rural family medicine program in Canada in 2001.

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 Hutten-Czapski, president of the Society says "We are very proud of the achievements of Family Medicine North. Fifty percent of their graduates are in rural practice at two years after graduation, more than any other program in the country, and they score high on the quality measures year after year."

Dr James Goertzen, program director says, "Our program is specifically designed to prepare family physicians to practice in rural, remote, and northern communities in Canada. Throughout their training, our residents complete a series of rotations in rural and northern towns. Within these settings residents acquire essential skills and knowledge necessary for practising in smaller communities. In addition, this results in multiple opportunities to experience how to work, live, and play, in these same communities. Our program's experience supports literature findings that the location of health professional training should be as similar as possible to the desired practice location of graduates. Although it requires more organization, we have specific initiatives to involve rural and northern physicians from throughout our region in all aspects the program - - preceptoring residents, leading academic sessions, resident selection, and supervising research. Our successes have been a direct result of the efforts of many physicians throughout Northwestern Ontario. Thus it is fitting that a significant proportion of our graduates return to practice in some of these same under serviced communities."

Second and third place winners, Memorial University Newfoundland and Université Laval, also have a strong regional focus and mandate and decentralised training. Memorial has 36% of its family practice residents go rural and won the 2000 Keith Award. Laval has 40% of its family practice residents go rural.

Statistics Canada has found that 31.4% of Canadians live in predominantly rural areas. Nationally 21% of family medicine graduates choose to work in communities under 10,000 population.

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Backgrounder

The Society of Rural Physicians of Canada

The SRPC is an organisation of over 1100 rural physicians. Every year it holds a national educational event. This year the 9th annual Rural and Remote conference has been held in Hockley Valley Ontario April 26th to 28th. This event, with over 150 attending, has been sold out for months. The Keith Award is given out annually for the best rural family practice training program. The methodology varies slightly from year to year.

2001 Keith Methodology

The winners were determined by combining the results of performance in actually having graduates practising in rural areas at two years after graduation, and the second, by reputation for quality rural training as determined by survey. Actually having physicians go practice in rural placements after their training was weighted at 60% of the final score. Assessment of quality of training was weighted at 40%.

Family medicine residents were identified through the Canadian Post MD Educational Registry for 1997 and 1998. Practice location was taken from the 2000 Canadian Medical Association database. Rural was defined as communities under 10,000 population at 1996 census by Statistics Canada.

Quality of training was assessed by survey of Program Directors at the section of family medicine teachers meeting in Ottawa Oct. 19 to Oct. 21, 2000. Directors were asked to rank the top 3 Canadian programs as to quality of rural training and to rank their own program as to support for rural training and availability of advanced rural training positions. Non respondents were followed up by fax and telephone.