



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

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rural Doctors Praise Clossen's Solution for Thunder Bay Regional Hospital

GRAND BEND ON / August 15th 2005 / - The Ontario Region of the Society of Rural Physicians praises Minister Smitherman and special advisory Tom Clossen for the work done ensuring that people in North Western Ontario will be able to get most of their medical care in the region. Some of the recommendations, such as reduction in hospitalisations for avoidable conditions at the regional hospital, and transfers of patients back to community hospitals for recovery, can and should be implemented immediately.

Peter Englert, President of the Ontario Region of the Society of Rural Physicians says "Some of these changes can and need to be done immediately and will help the North West to be able to look after its own. However the most significant changes to increase capacity at the regional hospital for angioplasty, at district hospitals, elder housing and nursing home beds requires high priority funding."

Many of these recommendations such as the \$60M investment in Sioux Lookout and \$5M in Marathon hospitals, \$50M in supportive housing and nursing home beds, and a \$1.5M increase for Thunder Bay to establish an angioplasty service, has been given to the new NW Local Health Integration Network (regional health authority) to consider. Dr Englert adds, "Let us not study this to death but arrange for rapid adoption and funding so we can proceed."

The issue is urgent. Currently data show that about 60% of air ambulance flights originating from the North West have to leave the region at great additional expense to the public purse. In Australia federal law prohibits regional hospitals from refusing patients that are sent in for specialty care.

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Backgrounder

Submission to Special Advisor Closson

The Society of Rural Physicians submission to Mr Closson is at
srpc.ca/Media/ClossonThunderBayRegional.pdf
and srpc.ca/librarydocs/RegionalizationSRPC.pdf

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 2,000 of Canada's rural physicians and comprising 5 regional divisions spanning the country reference <http://www.srpc.ca>