



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

Media Release

Communities Succeed Attracting and Keeping Doctors With Rural Primary Care Model - Society of Rural Physicians Survey

HAILEYBURY / Feb. 27th, 2003 / - The Ontario SRP committee's study released today shows that doctors can be recruited and retained with rural primary care contract models. The survey showed that unlike many rural areas where about a quarter of the doctors leave a year, attrition rates in Northern Group Funded Practices have fallen to 11% per year.

Dr Peter Hutten-Czapski, president of the ON-SRP, says "It is clear that the revolving door where doctors flow through a community, can be slowed where doctors are on contract to provide care for a specific town. We need to be able to expand on the success of this model to other communities such as Dryden and Kirkland Lake that are in desperate shortage."

Northern Group Funded Practices were developed in Ontario about 5 years ago jointly by the Ontario Medical Association and the Ministry of Health. Doctors were hired on contract basis to provide primary care medical services to patients who lived in defined geographic areas. While the NGFP towns are each an average half doctor short of a full compliment, this is similar to staffing rates in larger northern cities. All NGFP communities are at least at the number of doctors that they had previously under the usual OHIP payments. The NGFP contracts are being revised this year with important input from rural doctors.

Although not a feature of the survey, many responding doctors commented that the contract specifically was responsible for attracting physicians to the communities. There are 13 communities on a straight NGFP contract in the North. The contract was offered to doctors in about 6 other communities who chose to remain on fee for service payment.

NGFP communities include Atikokan, Burks Falls, Emo, Englehart, Geraldton, Haileybury, Little Current, Manitouwadge, Marathon, Mindemoya, Moose Factory (under a different contract), Nipigon, Red Lake and Wawa.

-30-

Contact:

Dr. Peter Hutten-Czapski
President On-SRP
Haileybury Ontario
705-672-2442

Lee Tepperman
SRPC Head Office Shawville
RR 5 Shawville, QC J0X 2Y0
Phone: (877) 276-1949 toll free

Backgrounder

Physician Shortages in Northern Ontario

The majority of communities in Northern Ontario are under serviced. The NGFP communities surveyed averaged about 10% under serviced which is similar to larger northern communities such as North Bay and Timmins. Currently the most under serviced towns in Northern Ontario are the ones slightly larger than the NGFP communities such as Dryden, Kapuskasing, and Kirkland Lake, all of which are at between a third and two thirds of the number of doctors that they need. Current UAP numbers are on the web at http://www.gov.on.ca/health/english/program/uap/desiglist_mn.html

The Survey

Surveys were sent to doctors in thirteen NGFP communities in November 2002. Information regarding how many doctors were in the community before the contract was signed, and the number of doctors who came and left since were obtained from eleven communities.

A summary of the survey results is at <http://www.srpc.ca/Media/NGFPsurvey.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 1,300 of Canada's rural physicians and comprising 5 regional divisions spanning the country

reference

<http://www.srpc.ca>