



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

## **Media Release**

### **A National Rural Health Care Strategy Needed - Canadian Senate Told**

OTTAWA / June 4th, 2001/ - The Society of Rural Physicians of Canada presented expert testimony on the state of rural health care to the Kirby commission last week. President Dr Peter Hutten-Czapski showed that there is a rural urban gap, and despite a rural medical school and increased enrolment in medical schools of 348 seats, the gap will continue to grow. Dr Hutten-Czapski says "Rural doctors are a national resource, rural health is a national issue and a national approach is needed to coordinate solutions."

A large part of the problem is that "rural" is not anyone's business. While the rural population is easily the sickest, provincial governments are busy trying to solve their problems by recruiting from other provinces, medical schools have mandates other than rural, and working conditions for rural doctors continue to erode.

Dr Hutten-Czapski says "We have inverted pyramids of care. The healthiest have the best access to physicians and the sickest the least." Any idyllic impression that the rural life is healthy crashes on the figures that show that the most dangerous jobs, the shortest life spans, the greatest morbidity, the most disability, all occur in rural Canada.

Rural Canada has about 20 percent of the employed Canadian workforce, 31.4 percent of the Canadian population and over 99.8 percent of the nation's territory. It is a highly diverse economy and society, from its coastal regions to its agrarian heartland. Canada's rural natural resources provide employment, forest products, minerals, oil and gas, food, tax revenue and much of our foreign exchange.

The Study on the State of Health Care System in Canada was established in March 2000. Chaired by the Honourable Michael Kirby, the committee's current fact-finding phase will identify pressures that will be exerted on the current system over the long-term.

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Website of the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology:

[http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/Committee\\_SenHome.asp?Language=E&Parl=37&Ses=1&comm\\_id=47](http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/Committee_SenHome.asp?Language=E&Parl=37&Ses=1&comm_id=47)

**Backgrounder**

**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 1,100 of Canada's rural physicians and comprising 5 regional divisions spanning the country

<http://www.srpc.ca>