



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

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEALTH - IT'S ABOUT ACCESS - AND SOME CANADIANS HAVE NONE

SHAWVILLE QC JUNE 7, 2006/ When a prominent medical association says that ' It is about access', they are absolutely right. However when the issue is access for the poor country cousin to medicare, the president of the Society of Rural Physicians Michael Jong says "Private versus public seems like a debate from the city. This won't solve our problem."

Working long hours, rural physicians struggle in an uphill battle to care for their patients. 9.4% of physicians working in rural communities are providing care to 21.1% of the Canadians living in rural communities. We have a crisis and this is not getting any better.

Dr Jong continues "Rural communities deserve equitable access as suggested by the Romanow Commission. We hope that the current Government will rise to the challenge. Its rural constituents ask for nothing less than a fair shake."

The Romanow commission recognized that much of the problem of accessing care in rural areas results from "the predominance of urban approaches applied to rural communities" and points out that "They need a different kind of specialist - namely, well trained and experienced generalist practitioners". Dr Jong agrees that "A major priority is the national reform of medical and nursing education to allow more practitioners to be broad based generalists." He adds "To implement this, a National Rural Health Strategy is needed to coordinate the changes."

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Background - Romanow Rural

The Romanow report called for the creation of a \$1.5 billion Rural and Remote Access Fund to address serious challenges in health care in rural and remote areas of Canada. This was the only one of five short-term funds that did not make it into the February 2003 health accord, despite a detailed rural health strategy provided by the Federal Ministerial Advisory Committee on Rural Health.. Mr. Romanow has publicly criticized this omission.

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>