



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

Media Release

Family Medicine North #1 for Canada's Rural Doctors

SHAWVILLE, QC /May 1st, 2002/ - Family Medicine North in Thunder Bay, produces the largest proportion of rural doctors of all Canadian family medicine programs. A study published today by the Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine shows that 51% graduates of Family Medicine North from years 1994 to 1998 were in rural practice two years past graduation.

Statistics Canada has found that 31.4% of Canadians live in predominantly rural areas. However only an average of 16% of Canadian GP's and family doctors work there. Study author Dr Peter Hutten-Czapski says "Family Medicine North more than doubles the national average by excelling in training doctors in the skills that they need to practice in those areas." He adds "With a Northern Medical School we will do even better by recruiting students from the rural and northern areas and training them in family medicine and the general specialties."

The Society of Rural Physicians presented its case to Mr Romanow this month on how the health care system could learn from successful models to meet the needs of its population. This would include recruiting students from rural areas and training them in settings that are as close as possible to ones in which they will work.

The study found that a large percentage of family medicine graduates from Memorial University (46%), University Laval (41%), Université Sherbrooke (33%) and also are rural doctors. Memorial University won the Society of Rural Physicians prize for the best family medicine program for 2002 on the basis of 10 year retention in rural practice of its graduates. Family Medicine North was excluded from the awards as it has not been operating for as long as the other programs.

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Contact:

Dr Peter Hutten-Czapski (705) 672-2442 or the SRPC office at (819) 647-3971

Web reference:

The CJRM study "Who makes Canada's rural doctors?" by P Hutten Czapski and D Thurber is published in the spring issue at <http://www.cma.ca>