



**Society of Rural Physicians of Canada
Soci t  de la m decine rurale du Canada**

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rural Doctors Shortages Worsen

MONTREAL QC /May 5th, 2005/ - Latest figures released by the Society of Rural Physicians show that despite earlier gains rural Canada is again losing ground and rural doctors. Today Canada is 21% rural but only 17% of GP's and 2% of specialists work there. SRPC president Dr Trina Larsen Soles says "Provinces are failing to meet the needs of their most vulnerable populations, the rural patients, as the rural urban gap increases. Neither is the federal government fulfilling its duties in health human resources nationally. Divisive tensions and lack of political will are to blame."

Dr Larsen Soles goes on to add, "Medical Education is also failing rural Canada as we continue to train people to become city specialists. We need a socially responsible admissions system that draws from under served populations and trains them in environments where they are most needed." To do this both the Federal and Provincial governments have to work together.

In 2002 the Romanow Commission on the future of health care recommended an integrated pan Canadian response "A truly national approach is needed to address the serious health challenges in rural health and to complement local or regional initiatives." Precious little has been done and while Canada has gained 2,225 doctors overall since 2002, rural Canada has lost 155 physicians.

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Backgrounder

Romanow Report on the Future of Health Care

The Romanow report tabled November 2002 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 detailed in

its chapter 7. This was the only one of five short-term funds that did not make it into the February 2003 health accord. Mr. Romanow has publicly criticized this omission.
http://www.srpc.ca/librarydocs/HCC_Chapter_7.pdf

Methods and Definitions

The Society of Rural Physicians regularly tracks the number of rural doctors by analysis of the database held by the Canadian Medical Association. Rural is defined according to the strictest Statistics Canada definition of a town and surrounding built up areas under 10,000 population. By this definition Canada is 21% rural. A provincial and historic breakdown is at <http://www.srpc.ca/numbers.html>

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