



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

Media Release

Doctors Endorse Rural Medical School

DRYDEN, ON / NOVEMBER 13, 2000/ - The Ontario Region of the Society of Rural Physicians have endorsed the concept of a Rural Medical school. While such a school may only add 12 or 14 doctors a year to rural Ontario it will raise the bar for the other medical schools.

The current shortage of physicians in rural Ontario, which is estimated at about four hundred doctors, will double by the time that the northern/rural medical student graduates its first physician. Even if this school achieves a 40% rate of students remaining in rural or northern practices, which would be unprecedented in this country, there will be far too few graduates to make a significant difference. The prime value of such a school would be to raise the standard for the existing medical schools.

Only in conjunction with an increase in the other medical schools and reform of their training to be rural friendly, a significant change can happen throughout the medical educational system. Dr Eisener from Dryden explains "One of the problems of the existing system is that the schools are accepting a disproportionate number of students from southern and urban Ontario, even though studies clearly show that they are unlikely to practice in the rural north." "We need a school in the North for the North, but also to change the South."

The concept of a rural medical school based at Thunder Bay and Sudbury is before the Expert Panel in Ontario. The panel is expected to report to the health minister by the end of November.

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