



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

Media Release

Rural Doctors Pleased at Romanow's 1.5B\$ Strategy for Rural and Remote

SHAWVILLE, QC / Nov 28, 2002 / - The Society of Rural Physicians is pleased at commissioner Roy Romanow's Recommendation to target \$1.5 Billion for improving health services for rural Canadians. SRPC President Dr Jill Konkin of Jasper says "This is an important recommendation that recognizes the unique challenges that rural people have in meeting their health needs"

Canada is defined by vast expanses of geography that imposes unique challenges and opportunities. The commission recognizes 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 Konkin agrees that "A major priority is the national reform of medical and nursing education to allow more practitioners to be broad based generalists." She adds "To implement this, a National Rural Health Strategy is needed to coordinate the changes."

It is the responsibility of the government of the day to deal with the recommendations of this report. The SRPC hopes that the commissioner's extensive consultation with Canadians and studied considerations will be an opportunity and mandate for a new level of federal/provincial/territorial cooperation. There is much work to be done and obstacles to overcome but we have a map. We look forward to the Ministerial Advisory Council on Rural Health's report as another tool to help with the job.

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The Society of Rural Physicians of Canada has been advocating for the health care needs of rural Canadians for over a decade. On behalf of its 1,400 members it presented two briefs to the commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada. These briefs were extensively quoted by the commission and are available at the societies Web Pages at <http://www.srpc.ca>