



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

Media Release

We Need Colleagues Who Want to be Here - Say Rural Doctors!

SHAWVILLE QC / Sept 17, 2002/ The Quebec Society of Rural Physicians (SMRQ) is pleased with MSSS minister François Legault's attention to the health challenges of remote regions, but do rural Quebecers really want to be cared for by doctors who don't want to be there? Currently planned legislation will conscript young doctors to work in the regions against their will. SMRQ President Dr. Maurice Lamarche says "What we need is to train doctors who want to work in the regions and give them the skills that are required."

Dr. Lamarche explains: "Medicine in the country is different than that of the city. With the high technology and the subspecialists of the cities distant rural doctors have to have a broad educational base and be the true general physicians. It takes different training to be confident to work where at night there are no other doctors. It takes different training to be comfortable looking after an inpatient with pneumonia, a women giving birth, the office and emergencies all in the same day. Rural doctors have to be good at a little bit of everything. Proposals for regional education of all doctors, and especially family doctors need to be funded."

While currently obligatory rotations in the community occurs for all family doctors, few spend more than a small percentage of their training outside large cities. Many graduating physicians express a lack of confidence of practicing in a hospital setting where, for the first time, they may be the only doctor around for miles during the weekend or night.

Forcing doctors to work where they lack the skills confidence and experience, will just increase the numbers of doctors leaving for New Brunswick and Ontario. "Don't give us doctors that don't want to be here" says Lamarche.

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Backgrounder

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 1,300 of Canada's rural physicians and comprising 5 regional divisions spanning the country