



President's message. Recognizing the expertise in rural and remote medicine

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Society of Rural Physicians of Canada

Société de la médecine rurale du Canada

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Rural doctors are a special breed. Physicians practising in rural and remote communities, by necessity, have acquired skills and knowledge beyond that required of their urban colleagues. The SRPC is considering recognizing physician members (with a minimum of 5 years membership with the Society) who have accumulated 10 years of practice experience in rural and remote communities, and who have maintained professional development with a minimum of 5 CME events sponsored by the Society. Recognized members would be granted a fellowship in rural and remote medicine. This award would confer greater recognition than the current SRPC Rural Service Award. By granting the fellowship, the SRPC would be recognizing physicians who have gained expertise through experiential learning, who have survived, and who love to work in rural and remote communities.

The SRPC is working with other national medical organizations to improve rural health care. The CMA has a new policy that supports a national rural health strategy. Other organizations, including the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, the Canadian Federation of Medical Students, and the Canadian Association of Internes and Residents, support us in our struggle to improve rural health care. We have a great friend in the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada. The SOGC recognizes the challenges that women in rural Canada face and has

collaborated with the SRPC to improve maternal and newborn care. Two years ago, the SOGC signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) allowing the SRPC to teach ALARM International. This year, the SOGC has committed to sponsoring \$6000 per year for the Rural and Remote Medicine Conference. We are working on an MOU that will allow SRPC members to attend the SOGC's conference at the same rate as SOGC members. The SOGC is starting pilot projects to support rural health care providers in the pilot sites, with designated support from their members in the referral centres. We will be continuing to work closely to improve maternal and newborn care in Canada and we all recognize that to do this, support is needed for rural and remote communities where the need is greatest. The SOGC is to be commended for its understanding and support.

In conjunction with the CMA, the SRPC is lobbying for "More Doctors, More Care." I encourage everyone to tell their patients, friends, community members, local media and MPs that in rural Canada we have half the number of doctors per capita compared with urban areas. We need a national rural health strategy.

This is my last president's message. I appreciate the opportunity to serve the Society. It has been an enriching experience and I have worked with great people. In April, Dr. Karl Stobbe will take over as president. I wish him much success in promoting rural health, and I will support him to the best of my ability.