



### President's message. *Quo vadis?*\*

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#### Société de la médecine rurale du Canada

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**W**ith the end of my first year as president of the SRPC approaching, it is time to take stock. During this year, I've had the opportunity to speak to the leadership and members of the SRPC and many other medical organizations while attending conferences such as the WONCA World Rural Health Conference, and meetings of the Canadian Medical Forum and the GP Forum. At these meetings, I often meet people who have very specific ideas about what our mandate should be. *Quo vadis*, SRPC?

Our grassroots origin is well known, and our original mandate is clearly formulated, but how do we implement our goals in 2013 and beyond? What should our next steps be in keeping rural and remote Canada populated by physicians (general practitioners and specialists) who can do the job well, have healthy lives and not burn out?

Should we concentrate on doing the things we do really well, or should we be more ambitious? We can continue to organize the best rural conference in the world every year, provide support for rural physicians through RuralMed, do a lot of very valuable liaison and committee work, and peck away at a few small projects, but I think we can, and should, have more impact on the selection and training of rural physicians. Countries such as Britain, Australia and

South Africa have taken massive steps in promoting generalism (e.g., with longer residency training) to achieve these goals. Are we ready to attempt something similar? How should we proceed?

Whatever we decide, as a society, will have many implications for us as a small-ish grassroots organization with a shoe-string budget and a tiny (but awesome) administrative staff. All of our members have very full day (and night) jobs, and to ask them for a sizeable time commitment is not realistic. We will have to find, appoint and manage staff to do a lot of the work. That will have financial implications. Other medical organizations have CEOs, health specialists and consultants. We have none of these; neither do we have the financial resources of other medical organizations.

I propose that we talk among ourselves and with other organizations about the future, as well as poll our members officially by mail, to reach a few consensus goals. It will be an enormous undertaking for us to start a project such as this, raise funds and then follow through. I think we can and should do it. It is our *raison d'être*.

This president's message is intended to be provocative and to stimulate thought and discussion, so start thinking and talking!

\*Where are you going?