



NEWS

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Cabin fever!

From all reports, the 4th annual Cabin Fever 2004 was a great success. Fifty eight rural physicians and 12 regional specialists, physician spouses and almost 80 children attended the event 5-8 February at Kananaskis. This annual faculty development program is designed to provide rural physician preceptors with an opportunity to increase their teaching skills. Preceptors are a critical link in the education and training of medical students and residents in rural Alberta.

Different programming streams were offered at the workshop in recognition of the needs of both new and more experienced preceptors.

The weekend, however, was not all work. Conference programming was

deliberately scheduled only from 8 – 11 a.m. each day in order that preceptors could spend valuable time with their families in the afternoon. Children’s programming also enabled parents to enjoy adult networking time with other physician families. Saturday night’s banquet had everyone talking about the delightful surprise entertainment provided by the Heebie Jeebies. The group’s show featured an original song written especially for rural physicians.

Cabin Fever is organized by the University of Calgary Department of Family Medicine and the Office of CME and Professional Development for the

Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan and its Alberta Rural Family Medicine Network. Spousal/family programming is also provided in part by the Alberta Rural Physician Spousal Network.

Spring Seeding

Spring Seeding, an annual UofA Department of Family Medicine organized rural faculty development event, similar to Cabin Fever, will take place 10-12 June in Edmonton.

Newfaces

New RPSN Administrator

Please join us in welcoming Gail Wacko as the new administrator of the Rural Physician Spousal Network (RPSN). Gail is a registered speech-language pathologist who has been in both public and private practice for two decades. For the past 10 years she has been instrumental in organizing significant portions of the Festival of Trees, an annual fundraiser for the University of Alberta Hospital Foundation in Edmonton. Through her work, Gail has organized exceptional events, worked closely with physicians and their spouses, and helped raise \$5 million for health services, equipment and programming. Gail was born and raised in Lamont and now lives in Edmonton. Gail can be reached at (780) 435-4679 or Gail.Wacko@rpap.ab.ca. Gail replaces Leah Lechelt who will devote more of her time now to her role as RPAP Physician Consultant - North.



Left: Leah Lechelt and Gail Wacko, new RPSN Administrator



Right: Kim Simmonds, RPAP Research Assistant - North

RPAP Research Assistant – North

Please join us in welcoming Kim Simmonds as RPAP's Research Assistant – North. She will work with Brenda Gaida, RPAP's Research Assistant – South, to carry out RPAP's strategic research plan. Kim is completing a Masters of Medical Science in Hospital Epidemiology at the University of

Calgary and also has a Bachelor of Science in Cellular Molecular and Microbial Biology. Kim is based in Grande Prairie and is no stranger to rural medicine. She is married to Dr. Matthew Simmonds, a first year RAN resident. Contact Kim at Kim.Simmonds@rpap.ab.ca or (780) 814-8266.

Immigration Without a Lawyer



Over the past year, we have followed the story of Dr. Johann van der Vyver and his wife Retha of High Level, who are tackling the Canadian immigration process without a lawyer.

The last time RPAP spoke with the couple, their application had been sent in for review by the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) Office in Edmonton. Since then, they received their application back with some recommendations for improvement as well as a last checklist. They used both to prepare their final submission that was sent to the Canadian Consulate General in Buffalo, New York.

"The people at the PNP office have been extremely helpful and friendly," says Retha. "For me, the hardest part of the whole process has been to figure out how all the different forms fit together. And that is something that you need to do with or without a lawyer."

(More information about the immigration process can be found in RPAP's Orientation Guide or the brochure: Recruiting and Immigration Steps for International Medical Graduates (section C).

Profile of a Physician Researcher

Dr. Rob Wedel



Photo: Trudie Lee Photography, courtesy of AHFMR.

Dr. Rob Wedel

like to become involved in research, give an RPAP Research Assistant a call. They can get you started!

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Dr. Rob Wedel, the new President of the College of Family Physicians of Canada and family physician in the Taber/Lethbridge area, is passionate about his work, his family and his research.

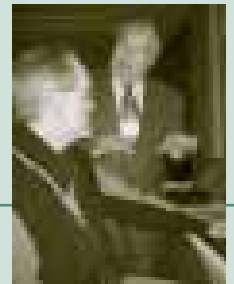
This energetic physician's research interests were launched through the Alberta Family Practice Research Network (AFPRN) when he participated in a few studies and found it to be fun and easier than he thought! Then, despite looking after a practice in Taber and being the Palliative Care Medical Director of Seniors Health in Lethbridge, Rob found time to take research training through the SEARCH (Swift Efficient Application of Research in Community Health) program.

"There are endless questions that we ask everyday that influence the decisions we make in our practice," says Wedel. "The misconception is that we don't believe we can find or even create the evidence ourselves. But there's lots of help and advice out there and, if you want variety in your day, give research some serious consideration."

Dr. Wedel recently received the University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine Award for Clinical Research. "This is a really great honour," continues Wedel. "I think it is significant that it was given to a rural community-based family physician."

If you would like to find out more about Rob's research endeavours, or if you would

New GEMS Training Program Launched



RPAP's new multi-media self-study General Emergency Medicine Skills (GEMS) training program was launched at the Banff Emergency Medicine Conference, 23-25 January. More than 110 physicians have expressed an interest in it to date.

Rural physicians often find it difficult to maintain their clinical competency in emergency medicine given their busy schedules and the distance from urban training sites. Yet these skills are of critical importance to them as they need to be able to handle every situation that rolls through the emergency room door.

The new GEMS training program enables physicians to update their skills

and to get the practical training they want in their home communities. All four modules must be completed to qualify for STARS Human Performance Simulator (HPS) follow up in the physician's community. In addition, access to the University of Calgary anatomy lab can be organized. Upon completion of the four modules and HPS simulation, physicians will qualify for an honoraria through the RPAP Enrichment Training Program. In addition to the GEMS launch to physicians attending the Banff conference, a brochure outlining the new program was mailed to all rural physicians in January. For more information about GEMS, contact one of RPAP's Skills Brokers.



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New Comm

PILOT TEST
RESULTS
PROMISING



A new RPAP guide for communities has shown some promising results during its pilot testing phase.

Physician Recruitment and Retention – A Rural Alberta Resource Guide is a new, 90-page resource manual to help rural communities, in concert with their regional health authority, to take a more pro-active and successful role in recruiting and retaining physicians. It is delivered to community working groups – such as community health councils, health task forces, health advocacy or planning groups, civic governments, economic development groups, etc. – through a two-hour in-service workshop.

According to more than 30 participants at one workshop in Northern Alberta, 90% felt that the session helped them to see the importance and to learn things they didn't

know before about effective physician recruitment and retention, and to feel that their community has the capacity to adequately support physician recruitment and retention.

The new resource guide was developed by RPAP in response to the difficulties rural communities throughout Alberta and Canada face in recruiting and retaining physicians. Although the reasons are numerous and complex, research suggests rural communities can – and often do – play a critical role in whether their community is successful in attracting and maintaining high quality, consistent medical services. Often, however, communities are unsure how they can contribute toward stabilizing and rejuvenating medical services in their area.

Physician Recruitment and Retention – A Rural Alberta Resource Guide offers insights, research findings and real-life Alberta stories on these topics:

Getting started: Understanding the health system in Alberta and how the medical profession operates.

Organizing for community involvement: How to effectively organize as a community planning group, and how to best use local talent and resources.

Assessing your community's needs: How to determine what level of medical services are needed.

The recruitment action plan: How to create a whole-community plan; why

Community Resource Guide *Available*



the plan should be written; and how to initiate recruitment.

Tips and strategies: Special needs of immigrant families; the role of financial incentives; the issue of real estate; and creating marketing materials.

Integrating new physicians:

Building and sustaining a relationship with the whole community.

Retaining physicians and their families:

How to inspire physicians and their families to grow and stay with your community.

The long-term horizon: Maintaining momentum over the long-term, and avoiding future crises.

RPAP anticipates that over time, the resource guide will meet its goal of “enhancing the stability of communities by increasing their ability to plan and implement successful physician recruitment and retention plans.”

For more information about the new guide please contact:

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“This was a very eye opening session for me. I felt that we were told the way it is and although I felt some grey (doom and gloom) I also felt energized to know that with assistance and openness from all partners — we’ll all find solutions.”

Conference Participant

Partnership with U of C Nursing

A healthy collaboration, with a focus on education and research, is the purpose of a partnership between RPAP and the U of C's Faculty of Nursing (FON). Members of the partnership meet regularly to develop initiatives of benefit to students of both rural medicine and nursing. Following are some of the initiatives underway:

Rural Student Accommodation

RPAP's inventory of rural accommodation for medical students and residents is not always fully occupied. RPAP will now alert the FON when vacancies become available for use by nursing students in rural practicums;

GEMS Training

There is the potential for FON to use RPAP's new multi-media General Emergency Medicine Skills (GEMS) training materials in its Nurse Practitioner Program;

High School/ Early Careerist Program

An FON representative participates with representatives of SAIT, Highwood Business Development Corporation and RPAP in the exploration of this initiative for rural health care practice; and

Research Support

Through the FON's research unit, RPAP developed a research toolkit for rural physicians. Now an opportunity exists to have nursing students (through their research class) help rural physicians conduct literature reviews, data analysis, etc. RPAP SEARCH-trained physicians will be given the first opportunity to access this support in the near future.



Rural Physician Wins PARA Award

Our congratulations to Dr. Fred Janke of Sylvan Lake who is the recipient of the 2003 Excellence in Clinical Teaching Award for Alberta. The Award recognizes those individuals who go above and beyond all expectations to provide outstanding teaching for residents in clinics, operating and emergency rooms, or in clinical teaching rounds. The award is presented annually

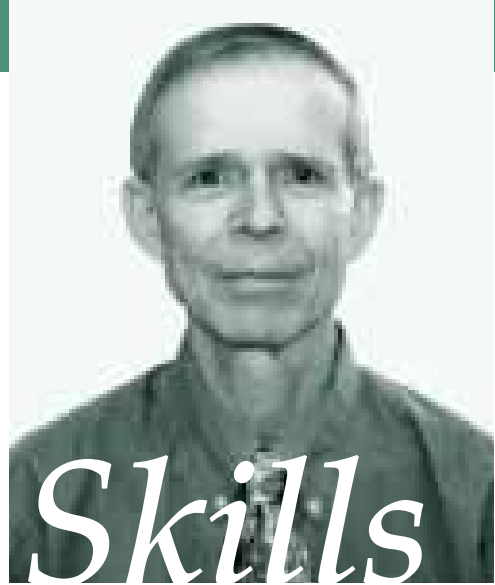
by the Professional Association of Residents in Alberta (PARA).

Besides his own busy practice, Dr. Janke is the Red Deer site director for RPAP's Alberta Rural Family Medicine Network, launched about four years ago.

Residents say that Dr. Janke "has faithfully provided insight at our weekly educational rounds and has continued his administrative role as our program's site director. He has

been there to help smooth over the growing pains that occur with the development of a new residency program such as ours. In addition, he has taken the time to get to know all of the residents and has made himself available to provide assistance to us in any way that he can. As a group of residents, we have been fortunate to have such an exceptional role model so committed to our learning." Congratulations!

Enrichment Training Provides New *Psychiatric* Skills



Dr. Martin Reedyk

More than 30 years of family practice made him aware of the fact that many people who have medical needs also have unaddressed emotional needs, so Dr. Martin Reedyk of Three Hills decided to follow his interest in mental health and to pursue RPAP Enrichment training.

"My practice has been largely surgery over the years," says Reedyk, "and I found that I could impact patients' medical needs by taking time to address their emotional needs. It was in that process that I also discovered that I had an aptitude for and liked this type of work. Although I'd done a lot of reading and taken courses over the years, I felt I wanted more intensive training."

In 2001, Reedyk applied for and completed a month of RPAP-funded Enrichment training in Red Deer. "I basically moved onto the hospital ward there, worked with the psychiatrists and was involved in the full range of psychiatric care: inpatient,

outpatient, and intensive day programming involving group therapy and personal therapy," continues Reedyk.

Now he devotes about half his practice to mental health and finds it is a growing area of practice. Only about 20 family practitioners across Alberta devote some part of their practice to mental health.

to Canada, he practiced surgery and family medicine in High Level for 11 years and has had a similar practice in Three Hills for the past 15 years.

"I think this enrichment program is a great opportunity to develop interests. Rural family medicine is very viable when a group of five or six physicians

"I think this enrichment program is a great opportunity to develop interests. Rural family medicine is very viable when a group of five or six physicians have complementary interests and can offer a broad range of expertise."

Reedyk is a U of A grad who moved to Nigeria for eight years following graduation. There he had a mixed practice that was largely surgery. Upon his return

have complementary interests and can offer a broad range of expertise. Everybody wins. It improves your satisfaction in the work you do and improves service to the community. It also increases the likelihood of your putting down roots and staying in the rural area."

And while Reedyk moved away from Nigeria more than 25 years ago, he hasn't forgotten the people there and the desperate needs they have. Every year he organizes two medical teams who travel back to the large hospital where he used to work to do teaching, surgery and clinical work. Closer to home, Reedyk, his wife Ann, their three daughters and their families all have an interest in hiking, bird watching and protecting bird habitat.

Medical Students Get New Rural Perspectives

A new RPAP-sponsored initiative has already helped three students at the U of A to decide to pursue a career in rural medicine.

As a contrast to the usual approach taken by instructors who are most often specialists, the RPAP Perspectives initiative provides medical students with opportunities to hear from rural physician generalists about how students can apply what they learn in the classroom to a rural setting. The students learn that generalists working in a rural setting can be very effective in diagnosis and treatment. Two sessions have been held to date, one each at the U of A and U of C.

“Dream big start sm



The weekend began

The weekend began with Monica Coneys, president of Shosholoza Productions in Saskatoon, talking about rural empowerment. About small communities that are rich in people, values and spirit – yet sometimes stuck in patterns of inaction and pessimism.

“Power up your community,” was Monica’s message. It’s in our hands and it’s entirely achievable if we want to rejuvenate our towns and villages; bring them alive with spirit and prosperity. All it takes is a dream and a plan.

A songwriting workshop

A songwriting workshop seemed like a zany idea as we attempted to compose a song as a group. But soon the message swept through the group.

We’re starting to dance to the rhythm of our lives.
We’re seeing the world through a new set of eyes.

We drummed up energy



We drummed up energy as participants created their own native drums from wood and mylar. Then the drumming began. Quiet, steady and controlled at first. Then loud, free and powerful. Not unlike the path of a rural dream that begins to take shape and capture the community’s spirit.

Participants at Nov. 2003 RP SN weekend retreat encouraged to power up their rural communities

Small” was the message from spousal retreat



The winning team quickly learned that big dreams start with small steps. Whether in our personal lives, our careers or our rural communities, it's important to keep sight of the overall goal while making small gains along the way.

The winning team



A team-building session



A team-building session taught us about dreaming big versus aiming realistically. How high do you aim? How much are you prepared to gamble? Is the “win” just as big if you reach it one small step at a time?

RPAP Initiatives

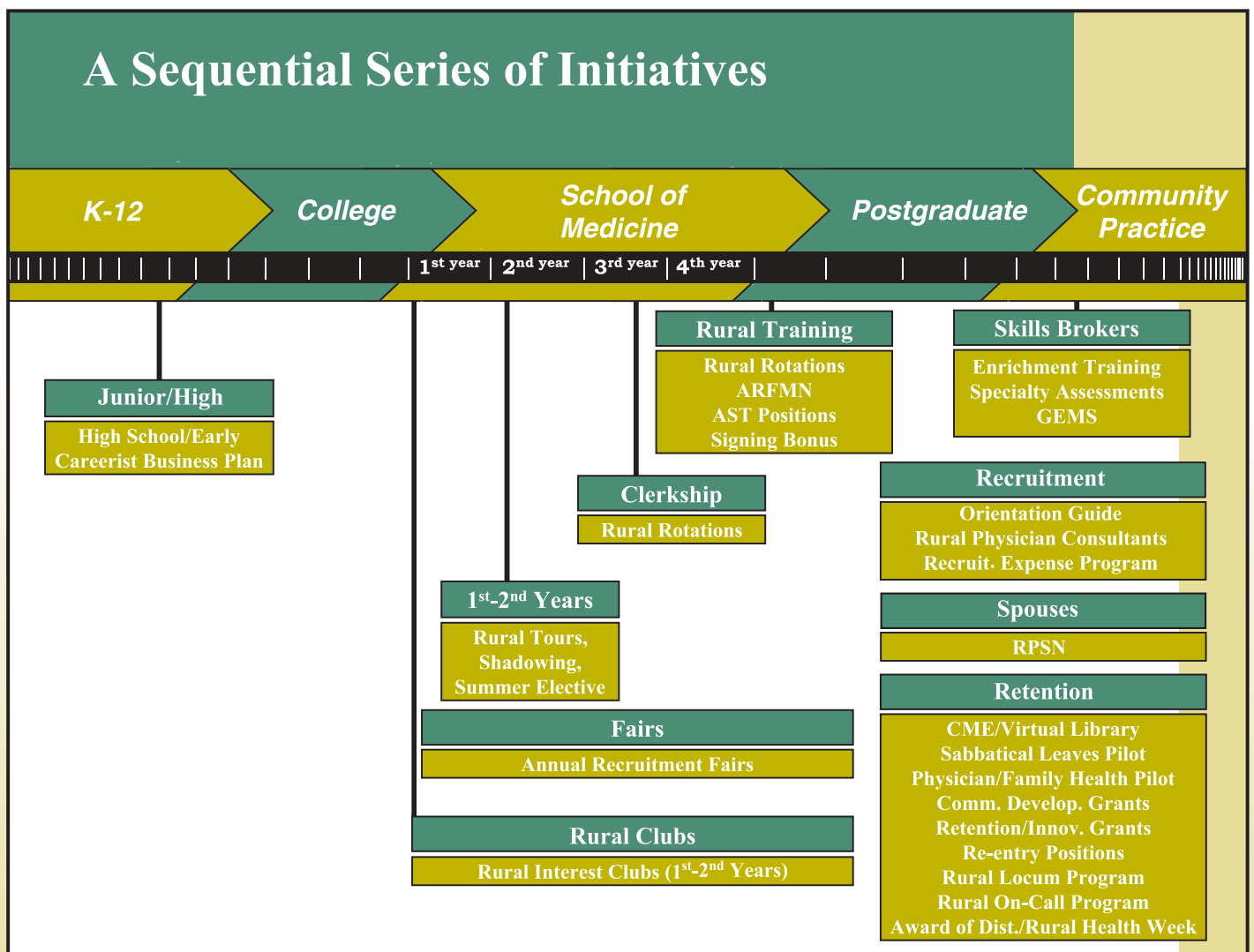
Influencing Physician Recruitment and Retention

In November's issue, RPAP News provided a graphic illustrating how the RPAP's initiatives directly relate to its vision and mission, and the variables

that influence the recruitment and retention of rural physicians.

The graphic shown here illustrates the sequential series of initiatives that RPAP

is implementing to positively influence candidates all the way from high school through to physicians working in a rural community practice.



NOMINATIONS
SOUGHT FOR

AWARD *of* DISTINCTION



Rural physicians who have made superior and sustained contributions to medical practice and their communities may soon be nominated for the 2004 Rural Physician Award of Distinction.

Public nominations are sought each March through TV and print advertising across the province. About 30 nominations are received annually for the award.

The award honours and recognizes the work of all rural physicians, especially those 'unsung heroes' who provide Alberta rural

communities with outstanding medical services and who also make huge contributions to medical practice and their communities by teaching medical personnel, conducting research, or acting as volunteers.

The award will be presented to the 2004 recipient at a community celebration during Rural Health Week, the third week of June.



Dr. David P. Miller, 2003 award recipient.



Dr. Stuart Iglesias, 2002 award recipient.

Third Annual Rural Health Week

The third annual Alberta Rural Health Week will be celebrated June 14 – 19, 2004 with more than 35 provincial and regional organizations participating.

Despite its many challenges, rural health care delivery has many innovations

and success stories. The majority of Albertans, however, generally only hear of the success stories related to urban health care. This special week provides an annual focus for rural health partners to raise awareness and showcase the unique

positive contributions and skills of rural health professionals and organizations. The RPAP facilitates the development of this week each year on behalf of its many community partners.

Welcome

New Rural Alberta Physician Families

Please join us in welcoming to Rural Alberta the following physicians and their families. Note this list is supplied by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta and may include a full range of practice categories ranging from temporary locums to fully licensed and practicing physicians. Errors or changes to this information should be reported directly to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta.

SEPTEMBER 2003

Dr. Arash Azmayesh-Fard – *Medicine Hat*
Dr. Hendrik Christiaan Boshoff – *Falher*
Dr. Philip Braithwaite – *Lethbridge*
Dr. Mark Nicholas Engfield – *Red Deer*
Dr. Khaled Mabruk Faraj – *Medicine Hat*
Dr. Johann Heinrich Herbst – *Grande Prairie*
Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma – *Red Deer*
Dr. Steven David Ian Sutcliffe – *Lethbridge*
Dr. Johannes Botha van Dyk – *High Prairie*
Dr. Johan Heinrich Viljoen – *Red Deer*

OCTOBER 2003

Dr. Adeleye Adelemi Musa Adebayo – *Wabasca*
Dr. Mujtaba Ahmed – *High Prairie*
Dr. Bruce Massie Anderson – *Cowley*

Dr. Entisar Badi – *Grande Prairie*

Dr. Johannes Cornelius Bouwer – *Ft. McMurray*

Dr. Omotayo Faroukh Dowodu – *Grande Prairie*

Dr. Gerrit Dekker – *Fort Vermilion*

Dr. Steven Gregory Foerster – *Red Deer*

Dr. Joshua Francis Foley – *Medicine Hat*

Dr. Jeane Lombard – *Canmore*

Dr. William Thomas Nolan – *Grande Prairie*

Dr. Roxanne Laura Swiegers – *Medicine Hat*

NOVEMBER 2003

Dr. Gina Marie Arps – *Westlock*

Dr. Jakob Jan Dekker – *Cold Lake*

Dr. Marthinus Strydom – *Sexsmith*

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Further information and details on the RPAP and its initiatives may be obtained from:



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The logo for Alberta Health and Wellness, featuring the word 'Alberta' in a large, bold, serif font, with 'HEALTH AND WELLNESS' in a smaller, sans-serif font below it.