



Alberta Rural Family Medicine Network

Annual Report
2003 – 2004

*This is the first annual
report of the Alberta
Rural Family Medicine
Network (ARFMN).*





Alberta Rural Family Medicine Network

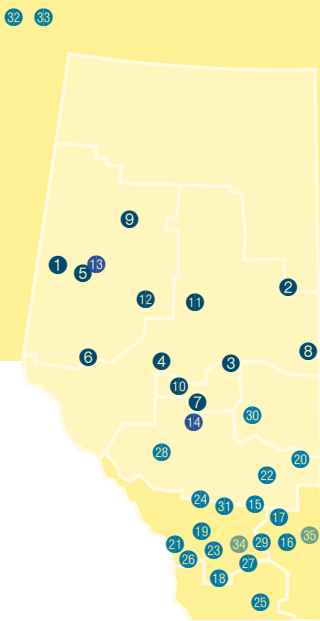
Established through the RPAP in 2001, the Alberta Rural Family Medicine Network (ARFMN) offers dedicated, rural-based Family Medicine residency training to prepare competent physicians for the broad demands of rural practice. The Network is a unique collaborative venture of the Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan (RPAP), the Family Medicine departments of the Universities of Alberta and Calgary, Alberta's rural physicians and the province's regional health authorities.

Several factors led to the development of the program: Alberta's chronic shortage of rural family physicians, its dependence on the recruitment of physicians from other countries to fill gaps, and reports of an RPAP working group and the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) which recommended the establishment of separate rural residency training programs.

Based on the premise that the best setting for training rural family physicians is rural family practice, 20 residents are accepted into the program each year and exposed to a wide variety of rural medicine. The program appeals to residents who prefer resident-led academic courses, more hands-on experiences and the wonderful lifestyle opportunities presented by practice in rural Alberta communities.

This two-year Family Medicine curriculum provides training mainly in rural and regional community and hospital practices within rural Alberta. The curriculum is taught largely by rural-based family physicians and specialists attached to the Family Medicine and Royal College specialty departments of the Universities of Alberta and Calgary.

ARFMN's two nodes, Rural Alberta North (RAN) and Rural Alberta South (RAS), work collaboratively and offer a number of joint programs using the academic resources of both units; both parent Family Medicine departments and both Faculties of Medicine. Each node accepts 10 residents per year through the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS).



RAN

Teaching Centres

- 1 Beaverlodge
- 2 Bonnyville
- 3 Camrose
- 4 Drayton Valley
- 5 Grande Prairie
- 6 Hinton
- 7 Lacombe
- 8 Lloydminster
- 9 Peace River
- 10 Rimbey
- 11 Westlock
- 12 Whitecourt

Home Base

- 13 Grande Prairie
- 14 Red Deer

RAS

Teaching Centres

- 15 Bassano
- 16 Bow Island
- 17 Brooks
- 18 Cardston
- 19 Claressolm
- 20 Consort
- 21 Crowsnest Pass
- 22 Drumheller
- 23 Fort McLeod
- 24 High River
- 25 Milk River
- 26 Pincher Creek
- 27 Raymond
- 28 Rocky Mountain House
- 29 Taber
- 30 Viking
- 31 Vulcan
- 32 Whitehorse
- 33 Yellowknife

Home Base

- 34 Lethbridge
- 35 Medicine Hat

2003 – 2004 Highlights

- The first ARFMN residents (2001-2003) graduated in June 2003:
 - RAN graduated seven residents in its first class. Of this first seven, one has gone into an RPAP third year Additional Skills Training program (GP-General Surgery/Obstetrics). Another 10 residents (2002-2004) graduated in June 2004.
 - RAS graduated nine residents in its first class and expects another eight to do so in June 2004. One resident of the first class entered a third year of RPAP Additional Skills Training in FP-Anaesthesia. Two members of the most recent graduating class (2002-2004) entered a third year of CCFP ER training in Calgary.
- Over the past few years, in response to suggestions from residents and preceptors, some RAS programming refinements have been made including the addition of an ICU rotation and a decrease in general surgery time. RAN and RAS remain two of the nation's most elective-rich programs that allow learners to tailor their time to areas of interest and community need.
- ARFMN infrastructure dollars were put into communities to assist the preceptors with their IT support for learning and the establishment of appropriate teaching facilities.
- Faculty development sessions are held each year 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.

"The sense of commitment to the teaching of residents that is extended by the rural and specialty preceptors and their communities remains the backbone of the success of RAS. Residents can be seen integrating the academic sessions into their rural practices with residents and preceptors both learning through the process. Interested residents have helped create enthusiastic teachers with the result that residents tend to choose those sites to return to practice in."

Doug Myhre,
RAS Unit
Director



"One highlight for me personally

has been the development of both Red Deer and Grande Prairie as outstanding teaching centres for both residents and students. Prior to the development of the Network, Red Deer had a few students and residents coming for electives and Grande Prairie had fairly frequent medical students in electives. Now residents and students have become part of the "culture" of both places. Of the seven residents graduating this year, I expect five to enter practice in rural communities around the regional centres."

Hugh Hindle,
RAN Unit Director

- A major achievement for ARFMN has been the development of an internet-based palliative care course and an integrated program on geriatric care. Development of the palliative course was largely done by RAS and the integrated geriatrics program by RAN. This latter course enables residents to acquire skills in working with elderly patients without the need for separate rotations in Edmonton and Calgary.
- Following a review of its organization and programming by members of the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) accreditation committee, ARFMN's RAS node and its UofC main Family Medicine program received full accreditation in 2004. Very favourable comments were received with regard to community support, resident support systems, faculty development, clinical experiences, unit and site director commitment, and academic teaching plans. The RAN node and its UofA main Family Medicine program are scheduled for their accreditation review in February 2005.
- RAN and RAS programs have become respected in the academic community with both RAN and RAS Unit Directors sitting on CFPC Committees. Dr. Doug Myhre (RAS) sits on the Accreditation Committee and Dr. Hugh Hindle (RAN) sits on the Section of Teachers' Executive.

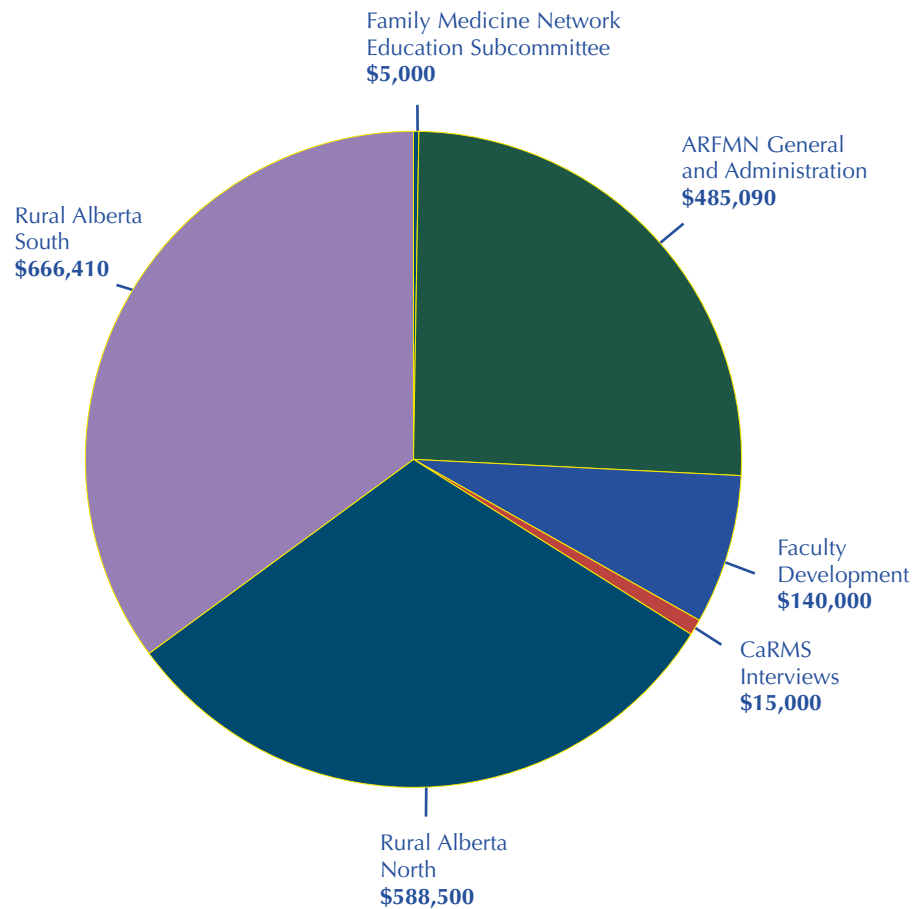
"With the hands-on experience, you're getting the best exposure working in a rural facility."
– ARFMN Resident comment

Financial Summary

The ARFMN operates within a \$1.9M budget allocated by the RPAP Coordinating Committee upon the recommendation of its Family Medicine Network Education Subcommittee.

The following pie chart illustrates the main ARFMN allocation for 2003-2004.

Practicing Rural Physicians and Families





About the Alberta Rural Family Medicine Network Residency Program

Goals

ARFMN's RAN and RAS nodes strive to provide medical graduates with extensive experience with the clinical conditions faced in rural practice, and trainees with the knowledge and skills required to meet these service demands and grounding in the realities of rural practice.

Benefits

This residency program provides residents with an opportunity to train in the environment where they will eventually practice, to be taught largely by practising rural faculty supported by full-time academic faculty, and to take advantage of the resources of both Alberta Faculties of Medicine networked together.

The program offers a more personal, preceptor-based learning experience than can be offered through traditional tertiary-based programs. Residents are exposed to an intense clinical experience that maximizes procedural skill acquisition and early and effective patient management.

Equally importantly, RAN and RAS build upon a decade of RPAP-funded rural undergraduate, Family Medicine and specialty training blocks and Additional Skills training offered through the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary.

Curriculum

Family Medicine residents of RAN and RAS enjoy a high quality of residency training provided through these units of the province's two fully accredited Family Medicine departments. This training leads to eligibility for certification in Family Medicine with the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

The clinical curriculum offers significant flexibility with respect to site, sequence and length of experiences. While similar to the main Family Medicine programs and to each other, the curricula of Rural Alberta North and Rural Alberta South have some variability. The general curriculum of both Nodes or units is comprised of core and elective rotations and a schedule of academic events that includes seminars, case presentations, rounds and workshops.

Eighteen third year Post Graduate (PGY3) positions are available through the auspices of the RPAP to provide an opportunity for residents to take up to an additional one year of training to further help prepare them for rural practice. Each resident taking advantage of this program is required to negotiate a return in service agreement (RiSA) with one of Alberta's rural regional health authorities or the Rural Locum Program.

"Isolation wasn't even a concern for me. Everyone was so welcoming and so friendly and wanted to make sure I was having a good experience."

– ARFMN Resident comment

"The amount of procedures you will get to do in this program far exceed anything you'll get to do in an urban program."

– ARFMN Resident comment

Resident Support

The Alberta Rural Family Medicine Network provides a range of support services for residents, including:

Financial Assistance

The ARFMN provides funding in the form of accommodation and travel expenses for training in a rural community outside the "home base." In addition, expenses related to attending academic sessions are also reimbursed.



Medical Informatics Tools

Rural Alberta North and Rural Alberta South offer a variety of current medical informatics tools to facilitate communication, delivery of academic programming, and evidence-based medical practice skills.

The Network provides Internet access to all residents at each training site. In addition, all residents receive a laptop computer and an iPAQ device for use during their residency. These devices are pre-loaded with a variety of clinical and support software and allow ARFMN residents to maintain a current procedure log.

Upon admission to the program, every RAN and RAS resident is given an ARFMN e-mail account and access to the ARFMN's Exchange Server. Exchange Server is used as a key portal for residents and staff to stay connected, to access their e-mail, tasks and calendar; and to review and download forms, policies and academic material through Public Folders.

The ARFMN web site is also used as a portal for residents, preceptors and staff through which to access their ARFMN Web Outlook and university web mail accounts and to use the university WebCT facilities.

Residents also have access to the RPAP's Virtual Library, which provides free access to Internet-based medical textbooks, journals and other resources. The Virtual Library is funded by the RPAP and is administered by the Medical Information Service (MIS) of the University of Calgary. The MIS web site also contains extensive links to medical resources on the Internet.

"I think the flexibility of training in a regional setting is one of the program's biggest strengths."
– ARFMN Resident comment

Education Sessions and Workshops

On a monthly basis, both RAN and RAS provide academic sessions to discuss important issues relevant to family medicine. These sessions are generally organized by the residents themselves and involve presenters from a variety of specialities, clinical and full-time faculty. They are delivered from one or both nodes (RAN or RAS) or from the respective Family Medicine departments. Many academic sessions are recorded or videotaped for later access. RAS delivers academic sessions during the year to its parent Family Medicine department.

In addition, workshops are organized throughout the year and held in various communities. Topics include, but are not limited to, Evidence-Based Medicine, Geriatrics, Palliative Care, Aboriginal Medicine, Practice Management and Communication Skills.

ARFMN Unit Staff and Residents

RAN

Dr Hugh Hindle, Unit Director & Faculty Advisor
Jean Blinkhorn, Rural Program Coordinator North
Dr Fred Janke, Regional Site Coordinator, Red Deer
Dr Sarah Brears, Regional Site Coordinator, Grande Prairie

RAN Residents (by entry year)

2001

Amel Abdallah
Gina Arps
Zoe Filyk
Nehal Neamatullah
Colin Oberg
Tom Peebles
Tim Yep

2002

Shauna Archibald
Brad Bahler
Mark Darby
Mandy Hyde
Richard Letkeman
Josh Olson
Tammy Paulgaard
Dave Sinha
Clayton Tuffnell
Marci Wilson

2003

Kim Anderson-Hill
Tim Ayas
Jared Bly
Lauralee Dukeshire
Sharlene Hudson
Mark Langer
Matthew Simmonds
Jason Unger
Shengtao Yao
Jared Yeung

2004

Stephanie Anderson
Candace Chow
Gary Davidson
Julie Hernberger
Lina Kung
Nicole Mathews
Margaret Naylor
Carla Pilch
Jo Ann Robinson
Andi Scheibenstock

RAS

Dr. Doug Myhre, Unit Director
Chris Harty, Rural Program Coordinator South
Dr. Sid Harrison, Regional Site Coordinator, Medicine Hat
Dr. Peter Koegler, Regional Site Coordinator, Lethbridge

RAS Residents (by entry year)

2001

Rick Buck
Sarah Makhdoom
Ian Phelps
Sue Bornemisza
Maha Hadi
Brigitte Dohm
Asma Sayeed
Lily Toma
Ludek Podhradsky

2002

Amelia Correia
Sergiu Ciubotaru
Anita Augustine
Clint Drever
Baljinder Mann
Bilal Mir
Dubravka Rakic
Sandy Tam
Hany Youakim

2003

Stefani Barg
Gary Butler
Colin Del Castilho
Brain Farrell
Martina Frostad
Daniel Johns
Sheri Lupul
Erin Nichol
Amarpreet Shergill
Nicoelle Wanner
Christel Whilborg

2004

Aaron Coma
Gavin Parker
Megan Milliken
Erin Ewing
Amanda Wagler
Scott Bicek
Catherine de Caigny
Sue Byers
Amy Gausvik
Wayne Burton





Funded by

