

The Rhapsody Physician Award recognizes the contributions of rural physicians, especially those unsung heroes, who provide Alberta rural communities with outstanding patient care and make notable contributions to medical practice and to their communities.

Dr. Karen Lundgard has done amazing work for Peace River in terms of medicine, teaching, leadership, advocacy, health workforce attraction and retention, and community building. In the words of one committee member, “there is no part of health care in Peace River that she hasn’t touched.”

On top of being an excellent rural generalist, she has been an important voice for community physical, mental, and social health, especially women’s health.

She has served as an educator, a mentor, an ambassador, a team player, an advocate, and a medical leader at the community and zone level as well on medical committees and boards that are too numerous to list.

Her involvement was integral to the building of the new Sunrise Medical Clinic and the Peace River Shell Rotary House, where visiting medical staff can stay close to the hospital.

Throughout her career, she has continually worked to help patients overcome barriers to accessing care and supported students and colleagues to continually learn, to teach, and to share their passion for rural medicine.

Outside of medicine, she is committed to creating community. She generously shares her passions: she establishes opportunities for her clinic staff to enjoy activities outside of work that allow them to be creative and to laugh.

As a fabulous cook and avid hiker, her colleagues appreciate her willingness to share her recipes, trail maps, and cautionary tales. Her love of travel is evident in her involvement with the women’s travel group that organizes excursions and helps build friendships among members of the community.

She has also volunteered for the Girl Guides, the Local Canadian Parents for French, the women’s choir, and she was a founding member of the Peace River Book Club of which she has been a member for the last forty years.

In the generous way she has shared her warmth, humour, and passion, she has helped sew the social fabric of Peace River. Indeed, her nominators insisted that she is “not just a pillar of the medical community, but of Peace River as a whole.

“She invests in people, not just knowledge... and that has always been what makes her special.”

Congratulations to Dr. Karen Lundgard, 2022 RhPAP Rhapsody Physician Award recipient!