

Calling all rural physicians!

The University of Calgary Cumming School of Medicine and the University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry urgently need new rural preceptors for this coming fall.

When medical students or residents spend time training in rural Alberta, it's more likely they will consider practicing in rural Alberta.

Their clerkship in a rural community can be as short as three weeks or as long as a full year.

Preceptors matter because without them, these students would never have a rural training experience.



Dr. Darren Nichols, Coordinator, Integrated Community Clerkship program, University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine/Dentistry

“As a rural preceptor, we need you because you have offerings that nobody else has,” said Dr. Darren Nichols, who is the Coordinator of the Integrated Community Clerkship program at the University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry.

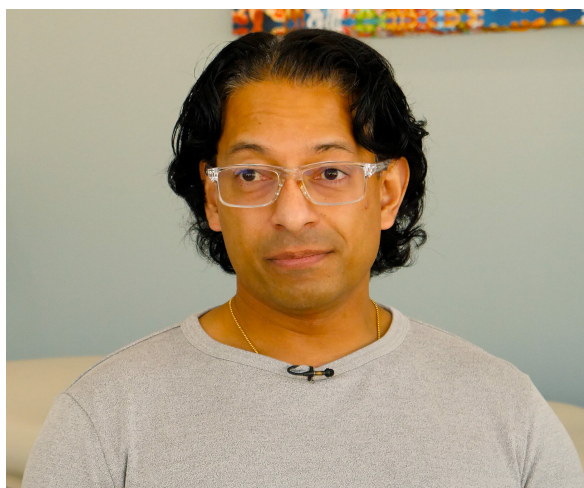
“You’re a potent role model for the type of relationship, that’s not just a deep relationship in continuity with the patient, but you help our learners understand what a deep relationship is within a community as a whole. And that’s a richness they need as they become our next colleagues.”

It’s been such a great opportunity to show them what it’s like to work in a rural area - Dr. Dewet Dowling, preceptor, Rocky Mountain House

Both Dr. Nichols, and Dr. Rithesh Ram, a rural generalist physician in Drumheller, AB, coach new preceptors.

“I quite enjoy the spontaneity of reviewing cases with learners,” added Dr. Ram, who is also a director with the University of Calgary Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship program.

“They will always bring very unique perspectives. It’s because they are right at the forefront of whatever new treatments, whatever new management strategies, [and] new presentations of what is happening.”



Dr. Rithesh Ram, rural generalist physician, Riverside Medical Clinic, Drumheller, AB.

When Dr. Ram first embarked on a career in medicine, he had no intention of practising in a rural area.

After graduating with a PhD in epidemiology, he expected that he would be practicing academic medicine in the city.

However, when he came to Drumheller for a six-month rural residency, that all changed.

“[That residency] totally shifted what I was going to do in life and 100% for the better.” remarked Dr. Ram.

In 2017, Dr. Ram and his spouse, Dr. Veronique Ram, opened the Riverside Medical Clinic in Drumheller.

Celia Walker did a year-long clerkship in Rocky Mountain House as part of the University of Calgary’s Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship program (UCLIC).

Her preceptor was Dr. Dewet Dowling, a rural generalist physician.

“It’s been such a great opportunity to show them what it’s like to work in a rural area,” shared Dr. Dowling.

“That comes with a significant benefit to myself because these medical students are so smart, and they bring so much energy towards my practice and to my patients.”



Medical student, Celia Walker (L), with Dr. Dewet Dowling (R) rural generalist physician, Rocky Mountain House.

“In the city, you are meeting new doctors every day, preceptors, and you don’t often get to develop that relationship and that trust,” remarked Walker.

“But, longitudinally in a rural training program, you do get to. I feel very prepared for residency, especially with how much hands-on learning I was able to get.”

If you’re interested in becoming a rural preceptor or you have more questions, here is where to start:

For the University of Calgary Cumming School of Medicine, email the office of Distributed Learning and Rural Initiatives: dlri@ucalgary.ca

For the University of Alberta, email the office of Rural and Regional Health: randrh@ualberta.ca