

Alberta Rural Health Quarterly

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Alberta's Rural Health
Professions Action Plan

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RhPAP travels with
health care students to
one of Alberta's oldest
communities
Page 4

Skills and thrills in Fort Chipewyan

Introducing a new
look for RhPAP
Page 3

Fort McMurray is
"opportunity never ending"
for medical professionals
Page 5

The 3 Keys to Successful
Physician Attraction and
Retention in Bonnyville
Page 12

Dr. John Gillett on life and
practice in Grande Cache
Page 15

CKD RESOURCES FOR PRIMARY CARE



Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) affects 12% of adults in Canada

In Alberta, primary care physicians care for approximately 95% of patients with CKD. They play a key role in identification, management and referral to specialists

1. Online CKD Clinical Pathway



www.ckdpathway.ca

An interactive tool to facilitate diagnosis, management and referral of adults with CKD.



2. TELUS Health EMR Encounter Templates and Outcomes Dashboard

Integrated within the templates are the Comprehensive Annual Care Plan (CACP) and the CKD Clinical Pathway facilitating complex disease management.

Templates are self-populating with guidelines that integrate CKD-specific goals, medical management, referral criteria and nutrition handouts.

The **Outcomes Dashboard** can be used to identify CKD and CACP eligible patients.

3. Netcare eReferral Nephrology Advice



www.bit.ly/eAdvice

A secure communication portal for Nephrology advice. It supports physician education, co-management of conditions, and care coordination to facilitate decision making in patient care. Advice requests can be billed by the sender and the responding clinician.



ckdpathway@ucalgary.ca



Introducing a new look

For over two decades, the Rural Physician Action Plan (RPAP) has served effectively as a collaborative partner and trusted advocate for rural Alberta communities trying to achieve greater access to health care. Since our inception in 1992, we have worked with rural Alberta communities and Health care partners to implement a series of initiatives, intended to enhance the education, attraction, recruitment, and retention of physicians for rural practice.

Earlier this year we launched a new look and new name, Rural Health Professions Action Plan, or RhPAP, reflecting our renewed support for rural Albertans who are working hard to sustain an accessible health workforce close to home. A renewed RhPAP will support the efforts of rural Albertans to attract and retain a broad range of health care professionals for service in their communities, and will offer professional development and educational programming for the present and future rural health workforce.



Dr. Bert Reitsma

Moving forward, we will also serve as a strong voice for rural Alberta. We have tasked our Communications and Marketing team to seek out the people, places, and issues that are driving the evolution of Health care in our diverse and innovative rural communities.

I invite you to encourage your friends and colleagues to subscribe to RhPAP Review at rhpap.ca/subscribe, and to share these successes and best practices with fellow Albertans who are striving to make their Alberta communities healthy and sustainable places to live, work, and play.

I also invite you to contact us at info@rhpap.ca if you know of an event or issue that may be of interest to our Communications and Marketing team.

We thank all of our supporters across Alberta for making 2017-2018 a great success. While there remains much to be done, we feel privileged to have the opportunity to do so.

Dr. Bert Reitsma is a practising physician in Blaimore and the Chair of the RhPAP Board of Directors.

RhPAP: Renewed and refocussed

Welcome to our second edition of the RhPAP Quarterly Newsletter!

As the second edition of Quarterly illustrates, RhPAP continues to serve rural Alberta in many important and unique ways, as we have for over a quarter century.

For now, I would like to bring your attention to three items:

1. We have rebranded, going from RPAP, the Rural Physician Action Plan, to RhPAP, the Rural Health Professions Action Plan. Our name change is intended to honour our history while signaling change and our logo does the same. We honour our past by including the sun icon from our original logo, while signaling our rural roots with the inclusion of an iconic grain elevator, and our Albertan heritage with the outline of the three sisters trio of peaks near Canmore. We hope our rebranding sends the message that while changing to meet rural communities evolving needs, we will continue to provide services that have historically proven beneficial.
2. One year ago, two RhPAP community development staff were working with 15 communities helping these communities develop and implement strategies to attract and retain health professionals. I am proud to share with you today, through the

expansion of this team to all regions of Alberta, we are now working with over 60 communities. We are presently redesigning our community development program so that it is more accessible, while including opportunities to learn about rural health issues and rural health workforce planning.

3. Alberta's Ministry of Health recently established a Physician Resource Planning Advisory Committee. The role of this committee has been put into regulation, with comprehensive details of the committee function described here:

<http://www.health.alberta.ca/initiatives/physician-resource-planning.html>

Of significance for rural Alberta communities, and for RhPAP, is that RhPAP has been officially named to this committee. Be assured we will take every opportunity to advocate for better access to physicians for rural Albertans.

Our small non-governmental organization has undergone many significant changes this fiscal year!

To learn more about what RhPAP is up to, please check out our 2017-2020 Strategic Plan located on our website here: rhpap.ca/plan

As always, do not hesitate to contact me. The RhPAP team and I are here to help.

Bernard C. Anderson is the Executive Director of RhPAP



*Bernard C.
Anderson*

Did you know?

About half of the RhPAP team live and work in rural Alberta.

A huge turnout for first-ever high school Skills Event in Fort Chipewyan

RhPAP and CAREERS: The Next Generation travelled to Fort Chipewyan to host a skills day for high school students.

The people of Fort Chipewyan are friendly, welcoming and know how to have fun. It was a privilege to be there.

About 60 high school students from Athabasca Delta Community School arrived for a hands on introduction to many health care professions.

“I wanted to give them an opportunity to find out about physiotherapy as a career [and] occupational therapy. We work closely together with [Occupational Therapists] and I told them also about massage therapy.” says physiotherapist Rosamond Smith.

Randy Sloan, a pharmacist, adds, “One of the skills that I teach diabetic patients is how to do their own insulin injections, so I was showing the kids today kind of the process I go through in an abbreviated form. I teach them and have the kids demonstrate back to me to see if they actually learned what I was trying to teach.” He added that the students did quite well.

Other instructors included dietitians, a sonographer (ultra sound) a registered nurse and an advanced care paramedic.

“The students got to throw some stitches in and they really liked it. You know, hands on, working with a few instruments and such. They felt it was really interesting. Some of them are really good at it,” says



“That’s what school should be about for kids... ”

— Gail Patrick, Literacy Lead, Athabasca Delta Community School

Vincent Dazé, an advanced care paramedic who taught suturing.

Grade 11 student, Brandon Fontaine enjoyed the opportunity. “I just like how everything came along. Great. Everyone had a good time and we got to learn something new in the health unit so I got to say it was a fun time.”

“I am so impressed that these kids have been able to engage in some very engaging activities. That’s what school should be about for kids that they can do hands on things,” remarks Gail Patrick, Literacy Lead at Athabasca Delta Community School.

The goal of every skills event for high school students is to plant the seed that a future as a rural health care professional could be their calling in life.

“If we’re exploring health careers and they are doing things with their hands at least they are being exposed to it and at least they know that there are positions out there that exist. So, it may encourage them to go into a health career,” says Michelle Voyageur, Councillor for Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

Vincent Dazé adds, “For someone who is from here to be able to learn some skills that can benefit the community, come back and help the people out, I think that is such a great gift back to your community.”

“Everybody would love for our own people to come back to our own community to practise,” says Michelle Voyageur.

Written by Bobby Jones, RhPAP
Watch the video at
youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP

Fort McMurray is “opportunity never ending” for medical professionals

Beauty. Opportunity. Diversity. Health professionals can find it all in one place – Fort McMurray.

Future doctors, nurses, and other soon-to-be health professionals discovered the best of this northern Alberta centre during a RhPAP Medical Skills Weekend event, which took place 30 September- 1 October 2017.

More than 60 students, studying a variety of health care disciplines, participated in a weekend of fun and education in Wood Buffalo, learning medical skills alongside peers in other health care fields, while experiencing the beautiful Wood Buffalo region in the fall.

A unique part of this RhPAP Skills Weekend was that it was planned in partnership with the Associations Canadienne française de l'Alberta (ACFA) in Fort McMurray and the Faculté Saint-Jean's Bilingual Nursing Program at the University of Alberta. With a pre-fire population of nearly 14,000 francophones, there is a great need for French speaking health care professionals.

“We always talk about interdisciplinary collaboration, but it's really cool seeing [it] first-hand and getting to know what the other profession's scope of practice is and how our roles overlap,” says Anna, a first-year bilingual nursing student at the Faculté Saint-Jean. “I was surprised at how beautiful it is, I didn't know how many trees were up here!”

Dr. Ravi Seyed Mahmoud, a recent graduate himself, believes that Wood Buffalo offers “opportunity never ending”.

“For anyone who comes up here, what they'll find is that when you put so many people in one spot and you make them remote; all those people need all the same services, and anybody who comes up here can fill those services.”

The doctor is no stranger to RhPAP Skills Events. He participated in Skills Days in Rocky Mountain House and Three Hills as a medical student, and volunteered to teach suturing at the Fort McMurray event.

“You take for granted how much someone else has taught you. You see the students who are still fumbling



with the sutures and you know at one point you were fumbling with the sutures. And so now you appreciate the people who taught you because your skills didn't come from nowhere,” explains Doctor Rav. “It's a very humbling experience, very rewarding and fun.”

Justine, a registered nurse in the emergency room at the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre, who volunteered to teach IV starts to the students, agrees.

“The opportunity to nurse here is great because we have a young population of nurses so you can move up in the ranks easily here and have more responsibility sooner.”

According to event volunteer, Dana Allen, Assistant Deputy Chief of Operations for Regional Emergency Services in Wood Buffalo, a big part of attracting medical professionals to Fort McMurray is simply bringing them here to experience the community.

“When people first get here, they are shocked that there is so much and that we have families that thrive,” “[There is] a real sense of community that people don't really think exists until they see the community itself.”

For Dr. Stephen Yam of Fort McMurray, the beauty of Wood Buffalo holds tremendous appeal for anyone interested in working here.

“It's honestly some of the cleanest air and the nicest night skies up here; it's beautiful. Anywhere there isn't houses, there's just trees. There are trees everywhere – it's just gorgeous.”

Written by Lucas Warren, RhPAP

Watch the video at [youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP](https://www.youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP)

On the road with RhPAP



RhPAP consultant, Rebekah Seidel, was at the Pembina Physician Attraction and Retention Committee meeting on 26 September 2017 at the Drayton Valley Hospital



Paul Childs and the RhPAP consultant team were busy throughout the months of September and October, attending zone meetings of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) in Lethbridge, Edmonton, Lac La Biche, and Castor to discuss RhPAP's new mandate, and concerns regarding health care providers in rural Alberta communities.

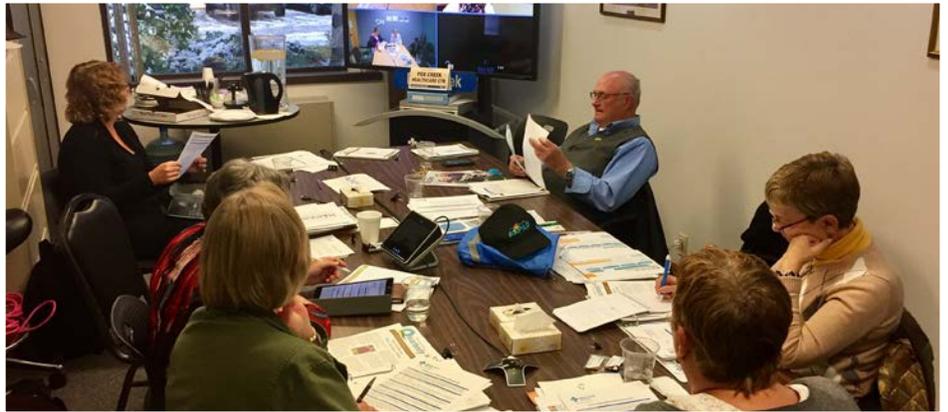
(Left) Paul Childs, RhPAP's Director of Rural Professionals Development, talks about the importance of RhPAP to southern Alberta members of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) in Lethbridge.

Thanks to Alberta Health Services (AHS) for inviting us to be a part of their community engagement session in the town of Tofield. Almost 20 community leaders engaged in great conversation and exchange of ideas with AHS Central Zone leadership. We were able to discuss the role of rural community attraction and retention committees, and we received good direction on how to continue our engagement with AHS, to support meeting Tofield's health provider needs.



RhPAP's Dean Lack participated in the McMans Youth, Family and Community Services Association's 14th Annual Charity Golf Tournament in support of "Make a House a Home" on 11 August 2017. The tournament raises funds to create homes for its clients with disabilities. McMans provides modifications such as handrails, wheelchair friendly flooring, accessible shower stalls, ramps, and lifts; and by purchasing household items such as furniture, small appliances and home décor. In these ways they help create safe, accessible and comfortable home environments for our clients.

Neither snow or slushy roads could keep Holly Handfield and Dean Lack from attending a 21 September 2017 meeting of the Peace Health Advisory Council in Fox Creek. Holly and Dean fielded questions from the group, and discussed how RhPAP could assist with the region's health care workforce needs. Thanks for inviting us!



In late September, Colleen Lindholm and Bernard Anderson gave a presentation to the Camrose Attraction and Retention Committee. They are a well-established committee who has done some fantastic attraction and retention work over the years, including hosting a successful Skills Weekend in 2013. They were very interested and excited about RhPAP's new mandate and asked a lot of questions how the expansion to allied health care professionals could align with their local efforts.

Earlier in the month, Colleen was in Bashaw to meet with the Health and Wellness Committee. She introduced them to RhPAP and the opportunities for support for attraction and retention. According to Colleen, they are really excited to work with RhPAP moving forward to help them build on the fantastic work they are doing in their community.

Thanks to Picture Butte's Chamber of Commerce members for inviting Julie Davis to talk about RhPAP's rural health workforce attraction and retention work. Julie says she looks forward to connecting with you again!



(Left) Bernard Anderson introduces the new RhPAP to the Mayors and Reeves of Southern Alberta in Lethbridge.

(Right) Colleen Lindholm talks about strategic collaboration and partnerships at the 2017 RAIL Commons in Olds.



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

RhPAP Community Group Presentations, Site Visits and Meetings from 1 June - 20 September 2017



Give your community a boost

Do your community's efforts to attract and retain health care professionals need a boost? Our Rural Consultants are happy to come to your rural Alberta community to discuss how RPAP can enhance your efforts to attract and retain health care professionals. We invite you to reach out to our Rural Consultant team at consultants@rhpap.ca. Let us know about your community and your challenges, and the Rural Consultant for your area will be in touch.

Is the future of rural medicine multidisciplinary?

“It’s the future of medicine period. None of us are capable of being everything all the time. We have a good pharmacist at the hospital. We have an absolutely outstanding community pharmacist next door. And we’ve developed a rapport where they’re not afraid to tell me I’m wrong. And, hopefully, I’ve learned to be able to say, “You’re right.” I’m no good if I don’t have good nurses to execute my orders. I’m no good if I don’t have the lab and x-ray techs to provide me with the technology to back up my gut feel. There’s a lot social work and mental health and all those other people. And I can be a lot of things, but I can’t be everything all the time. So ... I need them.” — *Dr. Allan Garbutt, Blairmore*



What challenges do you face in rural health care?

“On this site the challenge would be, I guess, for something big or something where we weren’t aware of what was going to come through the door. It could be a staffing issue. We have one nurse, 24-7 in the ER. Numbers of staff would be a challenge in these areas, I guess. And education. Feeling skilled and competent in those areas and being able to provide that education and experience to keep people feeling good about it and confident. So if you only do 20 deliveries a year, how do you keep your nurses’ skills competent and comfortable? That’s a challenge.” — *Liz Cook, Acute Care Unit Manager, Crowsnest Pass Health Centre*



Southern Alberta learns to CARE

“It’s about working together to accomplish a lot in a small amount of time”

— *Annamaria Mundell, Registered Nurse*

Physicians, nurses, and paramedics from southwest Alberta practised relevant real-life emergency scenarios in the familiar surroundings of Pincher Creek Health Centre during the Comprehensive Approaches to Rural Emergencies (CARE) course event held on 23-24 September 2017.

Annamaria Mundell, a registered nurse at Pincher Creek hospital, and simulation consultant for the CARE Course, says instructors address challenges such as remoteness, isolation, and how to create the best possible experience and outcome for patients when faced with limited resources.

“It’s about working together to accomplish a lot in a small amount of time when it comes to working with a team,” explains Mundell.

Dr. Gavin Parker, a CARE instructor who is also based in Pincher Creek, says the real strength of the course is that

it goes to the rural communities where professionals are working. Here health care teams get to learn and play with the people they’re going to be working with.

“I think it’s a bit artificial when we as physicians go off and train in courses when we don’t have our staff with us, because that’s not the reality of how we practice.”

According to Dr. Parker, the team building that happens both during the course and then afterwards brings the team closer together, and people feel more supported to work in their environments.

“That regular practice with the people that you’re going to be performing with makes the health care teams stronger, leads to better outcomes for patients—and how could you not want to work in an environment like that?”

The CARE Course is offered by the Rural Coordination Centre of British Columbia (RCCbc), and was sponsored by RhPAP.

To learn more about the CARE Course, visit <http://rccbc.ca>. - JFK

GRANDE CACHE

Alberta's mountain oasis

From the centre of Grande Cache, you can see 21 mountain peaks. If you love living right in the mountains, this may be the place for you.

With a population of about 3,600, Grande Cache lies approximately halfway between Hinton, an hour and a half drive to the south, and Grande Prairie, two hours to the north.

"I couldn't imagine being anywhere else."

— Melanie McKale, Registered Nurse

It's best known for hosting the Canadian Death Race each year in August. A challenging 125 km trek up and down mountains that draws competitors from all over the world.

One of the town's physicians, Dr. John Gillett has competed numerous times as part of a team, and even once as a soloist.

The area is blessed with jaw dropping landscapes. Sulphur Gates at the confluence of the Sulphur and Smoky Rivers is one example.

For many health care professionals, living and practicing here is very rewarding.

Melanie McKale, a Registered Nurse says, "I grew up hunting with my dad and my mom, fishing... in the mountains and I couldn't imagine being anywhere else."

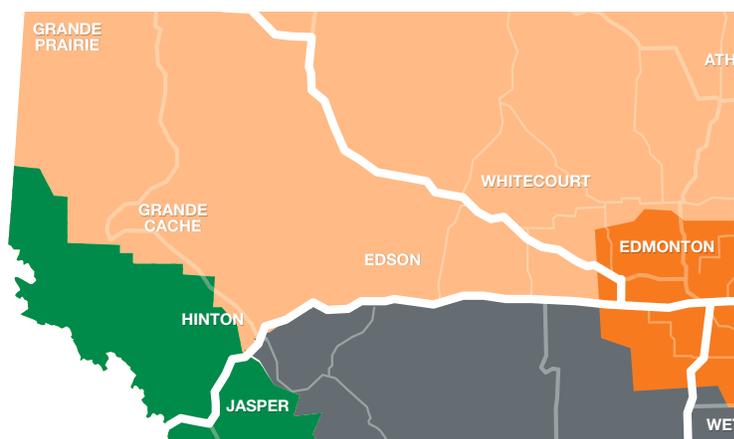
"Our little health care team is like family. We are personally invested in each other," says Dr. Louise Viviers Fourie, a physician at the Grande Cache Medical Centre, and the Grande Cache Community Health Complex.

"We try and give positive feedback, and we try and expose the team, as much as we can if we have a good case. We try to make sure everybody learns from it," says physician Dr. Esther Barnard.

"We all work together for the good of the patient and we have fun," adds Dr. John Gillett, a physician in Grande Cache, and a director with RhPAP.

Written by Bobby Jones, RhPAP

Watch the video at [youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP](https://www.youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP)



Getting there. The Town of Grande Cache is located in the northern part of the Rocky Mountains, along Highway 40, also known as the Bighorn Highway or Scenic Route to Alaska. This is the shortest and most scenic route to Alaska from the United States.

Bruderheim working to bring essential medical services to residents

For the last two years, the Bruderheim Town Council has been tireless in its efforts to better the lives of local residents.

Its most recent initiatives opened the doors to a new pharmacy in town, which has an attached clinic as a potential space for a new physician.

On 9 September 2017, Bruderheim Town Council and residents came out to show their support for Ehab Mohammed, pharmacist and owner of Bruderheim Pharmacy, at a celebration of the grand opening and ribbon-cutting of the community's new pharmacy.

Patty Podoborzny, Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Bruderheim, said they have been looking at what avenues should be taken in their efforts to bring a doctor to town, which is one of Council's key objectives.

"It's not just about finding a pharmacist," Podoborzny adds. "It's about finding the right person."

Mohammed is currently working on his Additional Prescribing Authority (APA), which will allow him to write new prescriptions rather than just fill them in an emergency situation, let him adapt dosage as needed, or renew regular prescriptions on the drug list.

He expects his APA will come through within a matter of weeks. Meanwhile, he will keep his prices reasonable and his service excellent, even if it means home-delivery.

"I will go above and beyond," he said.

The short jaunt downtown is much better than the previous option of a 20-minute trip to Fort Saskatchewan or 10-minutes to Lamont, especially for single-vehicle families or seniors who cannot drive. These are also the closest locations of a physician, and according to other towns in a similar situation, having a pharmacy to support those physicians is crucial.

"We want to be able to keep people in the community longer, and the only way to do that and be sustainable is to provide basic services of life," Podoborzny said, adding they have also connected with their MLA who has been active in advocating for them.

Resident Amanda Oldfield-West said she has loved the convenience of having a local pharmacy.



"I don't have to load up my three kids and I get to save money on gas," she said, adding a local doctor would be very beneficial.

The Town has also partnered with the Primary Care Network (PCN) to bring a variety of educational sessions into the community, which add to the services available to not only the 1,350 residents but the surrounding rural area as well.

For a doctor looking for a part-time position in a staffed and fully-equipped clinic, provided by the Town, Bruderheim may be the perfect location.

Judy Schueler, deputy mayor, says rural communities provide a quality of life not found elsewhere.

"It's not all about money, it's about lifestyle now," she said, adding a work-life balance is becoming increasingly important. "I think that's what this (opportunity) will probably give somebody."

By Alicia Fox, RhPAP freelance journalist
Watch the video at [youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP](https://www.youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP)

The Three Keys to Successful Physician Attraction and Retention in Bonnyville

Bonnyville is in a beautiful part of Alberta.

Moose Lake skirts the edge of this town of nearly 6,000 residents. It's a mecca for water sports, mountain biking, and wildlife. There's the nearby Iron Horse trail for ATV and snowmobile enthusiasts. You're also not far from Cold Lake, considered by many anglers to be one of the best fishing lakes in Alberta.

However, you have to have the time to enjoy it. You can't always be working, and when you're a health care professional, this can be a challenge.

That's where Dr. Hendrik van der Watt comes in.

Dr. van der Watt is responsible for physician recruitment in Bonnyville. He credits support from RhPAP, and the community recruitment committee, for their success in recruiting physicians.

"I think the important thing is to convey a message that you are part of a team and that the team has a common goal. And if you can get that across then people really get engaged. And once people are engaged you can get a lot more done," says Dr. van der Watt. "We also very quickly realized that a big obstacle in physicians coming to rural areas is having a work/life balance,"

A huge leap forward in improving work/life balance came with the introduction of a hospitalist program, as initially suggested by Dr. Travis Webster.

"When a typical rural physician works and admits a patient, as long as that patient is in the ward, you are responsible for them. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And if he's there for 365 days, then 365 days. So even though your clinic day is done at 4:00, you are still responsible to cover that patient. So, it's really limiting with how you move."

"We decided to divide the workload amongst each other where each of our 14 physicians will be on call for a week. They come in when the rotation starts at 8 o'clock and they will be seeing all the patients and being on call for them until the next Thursday at 8 when the next physician takes over. And that provides freedom then for the other 13 physicians to not have responsibility for in-patient care."

With doctors changing every Thursday, it was necessary to find a way to bridge the gap in continuity of care. The



The top three reasons for successful physician attraction and retention in Bonnyville:

1. **Being part of a team with common goals.**
2. **Enjoying Work life balance.**
3. **Accommodating part time physicians.**

Bonnyville team lobbied for, and got, a nurse practitioner.

"And that has proven to be immensely successful. The knowledge that she brought as well as the continuity of care has really just enhanced our program. And I must say our patients really love it. And our docs love it and our staff love it.

The Bonnyville team also took steps to accommodate physicians who for family reasons wanted to change to part time hours.

"We increased our ER shifts from two shifts a day to three shifts a day, making them a little bit shorter. That also helped us get our female physicians that decided to start families to come back and do ER shifts, when in the past they wouldn't, because now they can do the night shifts. At eight o'clock the kids are in bed and mom can go to work and by the time the kids are up, mom is back at home."

Dr. van der Watt concludes, "I really feel passionate about what we are doing. I was accepted in this community with open arms and wanted to try and do my best to make sure that we continue the services that people require and even exceed that."

Written by Bobby Jones, RhPAP

Watch the video at [youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP](https://www.youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP)

Rural Alberta clinics receive prestigious provincial award

Two rural Alberta clinics have been honoured for exhibiting excellence and leadership in patient and community care.

Moose & Squirrel Medical Clinic of Sundre, and Sylvan Family Health Centre in Sylvan Lake, have been named the first-ever recipients of the Alberta College of Family Physicians [ACFP] Outstanding Family Practice Award in 2017.

“We’re so proud of them for having done this, and really set a standard that we can only hope to emulate in the future. That all clinics would be able to look at the pieces and look at this model and say, ‘we can do that’”

— Dr. Joan Horton

The award celebrates health providers who exhibit the principles of the Patient’s Medical Home model, which includes a patient-centred approach, team-based care, timely access, comprehensive care, and continuity of care.

According to the ACFP: “[Sylvan Lake] has provided tremendous examples of success of the [Patient’s Medical Home] vision and provides mentorship and guidance for other clinics throughout the province.”

At Moose & Squirrel Medical Clinic, a nurse practitioner, nurses and other health care professionals work with family physicians as a team. It’s a multidisciplinary approach.

Together, they provide care that focuses on patient needs first, providing them with timely access to comprehensive care throughout all stages of life. It’s considered the future of family practice in Canada.

Physician Dr. Rob Warren, says “We take way better care of our patients working together than any of us could on our own.”

The group at Moose & Squirrel is being recognized for the high level of care they provide.

Dr. Joan Horton is the Recognition and Awards Committee Chair with Alberta College of Family Physicians. She came from Calgary to present the award.



Drs. Michelle and Rob Warren of Sundre’s Moose & Squirrel Clinic accept a 2017 ACFP Outstanding Family Practice Award from Terri Potter (L) and Dr. Joan Horton (R).

“It’s a great day to have this inaugural award presented to this outstanding, innovative team.”

Sundre Mayor Terry Leslie brought greetings and congratulations from what he described as a very grateful community.

Mayor Leslie added, “Drs. Michelle and Rob Warren are pioneers. They and their team, all of these people that are here today, bring to this community remarkable practice.”

Dr. Vesta Michelle Warren credits the team at the Moose & Squirrel for their achievement. “This is their clinic as much as it is ours. So I’m thrilled that this award is an award that’s recognizing them.”

Dr. Rob Warren adds, “It may be the doctor’s name that’s on the prescription, or the doctor’s name on the door but it’s the entire team that’s pulling together to deliver high quality care.”

Leah Jensen, Quality Improvement Manager loves working at Moose & Squirrel Clinic. “It’s a family here. Everyone takes care of each other.”

Terri Potter, executive director of Alberta College of Family Physicians, says, “Rural people are able to look at the resources they have and create something.”

“We’re so proud of them for having done this, and really set a standard that we can only hope to emulate in the future. That all clinics would be able to look at the pieces and look at this model and say, ‘we can do that,’” says Dr. Joan Horton.

Written by Bobby Jones, RhPAP

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Rural Alberta is the “perfect fit” for Blairmore’s Dr. Bert Reitsma

Dr. Bert Reitsma has come a long way to become one of rural Alberta’s strongest advocates.

An accomplished surgeon, Dr. Reitsma began his career in the Netherlands, and during the past 45 years, has worked extensively in the academic and business world, including a stint with the University of Ottawa’s Surgery and Plastic Surgery Department. Feeling the urge to go back to hands-on patient care, Dr. Reitsma came west. He moved first to a practice in Barrhead, Alberta, and eventually landed in the Crowsnest Pass.

“This was the perfect fit,” says Dr. Reitsma about working in Blairmore, where he has a practice and is a general surgeon. “With the rural setting, there is more close-knit communities. You know the patient ... and it is personally rewarding to a physician.”

It was this love of rural that motivated him to become involved with the Rural Physician Action Plan (RPAP), which would eventually become RhPAP.

“I really love to be a promoter of rural medicine in general and I see that there is quite a need for Albertans to have optimal access to medical and surgical care,”

he says. “Albertans living rural still have a right to the best medical services. I think the most important thing to get more support in rural health care delivery is that you need a voice. RhPAP is known as a voice for rural.”

During his time with the organization this voice for rural has only gotten louder.

“The government has given RhPAP a new mandate: focus on the health care delivery system in rural Alberta rather than just the physicians,” explains Dr. Reitsma. “That is a

challenge. But [RhPAP] took this challenge because we think that it is not only doctors that make a difference – they do – but [there are also] many support professions like nurse practitioners, physician assistants, technicians in the support systems, radio imaging, etc. We should also focus on the local communities, they should know what RhPAP is, and what we can do to get a better health care delivery system in their municipalities.”

Dr. Reitsma is confident that RhPAP is up to its new challenge. “We should have an advocate for focusing on the labour part of health care, the municipalities and on the execution of health care by the government,” he says. “RhPAP is very happy that the government has turned to us to advise them on access to care for all Albertans. We have the experience and commitment in our organization to be able to make a difference.”

Written by Lucas Warren, RhPAP

Watch the video at [youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP](https://www.youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP)

“With the rural setting, there is more close-knit communities. You know the patient ... and it is personally rewarding to a physician.”



Dr. John Gillett on life and practice in Grande Cache

Twenty years ago, Dr. John Gillett came to Grande Cache from South Africa, with a short stint in Regina on the way.

“Grande Cache is as beautiful as it gets. To me, it’s more beautiful than Jasper, more beautiful than Banff. From my bedroom balcony, I see 13 mountain peaks,” says Dr. Gillett.

Go outside and you can see 21 mountain peaks. Dr. Gillett has hiked to the top of them all. He’s an avid outdoorsman. He’s participated many times in the infamous Canadian Death Race that’s held every August in Grande Cache.

Don’t be surprised to see Dr. Gillett driving through town in his 1915 Ford Model T. It’s actually one of two in Grande Cache.

Dr. Gillett’s wife, Dr. Essie Barnard also practices here.

“I don’t think there is another town in rural Alberta with the natural beauty of this town. It is a privilege to live here,” says Dr. Barnard.

John embraces the challenges of rural practice. “I think the nice thing about rural practice, at least here, is that you don’t know what to expect on any given day. Some days are quiet and you just do clinic work. And then tomorrow, all hell breaks loose and multiple trauma comes through the door. And that’s what I think makes it exciting.”

“We couldn’t practice here if we didn’t have that collegiality at least amongst the physicians to take calls for my patients when I’m not in town or not on call. And then there’s the multidisciplinary team with the nurses at the hospital, always keen to help. Lab, x-ray, we all work together for the good of the patient and we have fun!”

He’s been an RhPAP Director since 2014 and is passionate about the organization’s expanded role to represent all health professions in rural areas.

“I think the plan is fantastic because it’s not just physician based. It’s rural health care professional based. And I think that’s vital to the stability of health care rurally. And, I hope that RhPAP becomes the pivot around which all aspects of rural health care move.”



Dr. John Gillett with some of his team in Grande Cache

“Grande Cache is as beautiful as it gets. To me, it’s more beautiful than Jasper, more beautiful than Banff. “

Written by Bobby Jones, RhPAP

Watch the video at [youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP](https://www.youtube.com/AlbertaRhPAP)



Transition to Practice

INFORMATION SESSIONS

Get a head start on:

- Transition timelines
- Considerations for entering practice
- Experiences of new-in-practice physicians
- Recruiter networking

Red Deer

December 8, 2017 | 5 – 7:30 p.m.
Red Deer Room, Baymont Inn & Suites
RSVP by December 1

Lethbridge

January 18, 2018 | 7 – 9:15 p.m.
Lethbridge Lodge Hotel & Conference Centre
RSVP by January 11

Food will be available
Door prize: \$100 gift card for London Drugs

RSVP to para@para-ab.ca. Please include your name, program and the location for which you are RSVPing.

Please be advised that photos and videos will be taken at this event.

About Alberta Rural Health Quarterly

Alberta Rural Health Quarterly is published four times a year by the Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP), formerly known as the Rural Physician Action Plan, or “RPAP”.

Quarterly is distributed by mail to rural health care and government stakeholders throughout the province of Alberta.

Issues of Quarterly are also free to download from the RhPAP website, rhpap.ca/quarterly.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions regarding Alberta Rural Health Quarterly, please email Jonathan Koch at communications@rhpap.ca.

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Supporting rural Alberta communities meet their health workforce needs is our field of expertise.

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IS SEEKING PRECEPTORS IN RURAL LOCATIONS

What is the MCAP Online Plus for Rural Alberta program?
The aim of the Medical Communication Assessment Program (MCAP) is to advance the professional integration of immigrant IMGs into the Alberta Healthcare system through an online instructional component and a workplace component. The program provides participants with a foundation in patient-centred care and the communication and intercultural skills needed for successful integration.

Preceptor Work Placement Details:
Dates: From September 1st to December 15th
**Note: Days and times will vary as they are based on the availability of the preceptor and participant*
Total Hours: 96-100
Preceptor Honorarium: \$2,000 per participant

For more information, contact:
Heather Kerr or Deidre Lake
Office: 587-579-6227 (MCAP)
Email: heather@communicate2integrate.ca or deidre@communicate2integrate.ca



Dr. Tamer El Magh, MCAP Participant
Obtained a residency position in family medicine and is now in practice in Alberta





MCAP Online Modules:

- 1 An Introduction to Patient-Centred Care
- 2 Giving Advice & Including the Patient in the Management Plan
- 3 Dealing with Teenagers
- 4 Dealing with Difficult Patients
- 5 Breaking Bad News
- 6 Medical Ethics
- 7 Preparing for the OSCE: Techniques, Tips & Strategies
- 8 Preparing for the Mini Multiple Interview (MMI): Techniques, Tips & Strategies
- 9 Collaborative Care, Teamwork, and Conflict Resolution
- 10 Integrating Successfully into Rural Practice
- 11 Bridging Cultural Diversity in the Workplace
- 12 An Orientation to the Alberta Healthcare System

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