



For Immediate Release

**Rural Week 2010
Rural and Northern Manitoba Communities Host
First Year Medical Students**

On May 17 - 21, one hundred and ten first-year University of Manitoba - Faculty of Medicine medical students will descend upon over 40 rural and northern Manitoba communities. Rural Week 2010 will be the eighth annual Rural Week installment where organizers from Manitoba's Office of Rural & Northern Health and the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Medicine team up to give medical students a firsthand rural/northern medical experience.

Since the inception of Rural Week, fifty-five communities in rural & northern Manitoba as well as the remote communities of Rankin Inlet & Sanikiluaq, Nunavut have hosted first year medical students. Collectively, these communities have hosted a total of 753 students. Thirteen of these communities have participated every year the Rural Week program has operated.

During the week, students are given real-life exposure to the rewards and challenges of practicing medicine in rural and northern Manitoba, training experiences which are different than those which they more typically encounter in an urban setting.

Visit Coordinators and Preceptors in each community work together to arrange student schedules which offer a wide range of clinical exposure as well as allow for time to enjoy life outside of the city and to discover some of the many benefits of a rural/northern lifestyle. Rural Week presents communities with the opportunity to showcase themselves and promote the opportunities, challenges and benefits of rural and northern medicine.

Rural Week is a component of a broader strategy to expose medical students and residents to the rewards of rural/northern practice and rural/northern lifestyles. Other components include rural/northern exposure at various stages of medical training, rural/northern family medicine residency and financial incentives to encourage rural/northern practice. Family medicine graduates from the last two years were participants in the first two years of the Rural Week program. A number of these recent graduates are currently practicing medicine in rural/northern Manitoba and had the benefit of the Rural Week experience. These include: Dr. Jennifer St. Goddard (Portage), Dr. Elaine Csupak (Selkirk); Dr. Holly Hamilton (Notre Dame), Dr. Heather Menzies (The Pas), Dr. Joe Lines (Winkler), Dr. Heather Lehman (Winkler), Dr. Melissa Caswill (Winkler) and Dr. Sara Scott (Dauphin).

Rural Week 2010 will see students travel to the following rural & northern communities in groups of two to five students. Rural Week sites for 2010 are: Altona, Arborg, Ashern, Beausejour, Brandon, Carman, Dauphin, Eriksdale, Flin Flon, Garden Hill, Gillam, Gimli, Gladstone, Hamiota, Minnedosa, Morden, Morris, Neepawa, Niverville, Notre Dame de

Lourdes, Pinawa, Pine Falls, Poplar River, Portage la Prairie, Rankin Inlet, Red Sucker Lake/Wasagamach, Rivers, Russell, Sanikiluaq, Selkirk, St. Pierre, Ste. Anne, Ste. Rose du lac, Steinbach, Stonewall, Swan Lake/Somerset, Swan River, The Pas, Thompson, Winkler.

On Friday May 21 at 7 pm, students will reassemble at a central site to discuss their varied experiences during the week.

This valuable learning experience is possible through the commitment of community volunteers and the physicians who have agreed to act as preceptors/teachers to the students.

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