



RMHMP

**ANNUAL REPORT
2018**



The Rural Manitoba Health Mentorship Program is a partnership between the Office of Rural and Northern Health (ORNH) and three rural Manitoba hospitals. This program provides prospective medical students the opportunity to learn about the clinical and non-clinical aspects of rural Manitoba health care.

Annual Report 2018

The Rural Manitoba Health Mentorship Program (RMHMP) was created to give students an opportunity to gain practical and realistic experiences in the healthcare field. This opportunity allows prospective medical students to become familiar with the practice of rural medicine during a one-week placement in a rural Manitoba hospital. As such, the goals of this program are two-fold: to give participants direct exposure to the realities of the medical field and to expand their understanding of the unique challenges and benefits of rural medical practice. Initially developed in 2005 by three aspiring medical students - Edward Tan, Sunny Singh, and Gordon Li - today's RMHMP continues its annual operation under the guidance and support of the Office of Rural and Northern Health (ORNH).

Edward Tan (Graduate, University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine Class of 2011) and Wayne Heide (Administrative Director, ORNH) serve as executive directors for the program, while student volunteers are responsible for managing the program's coordination and development.

In 2018, nine competitively selected students from Manitoba universities participated in a one-week placement at one of three rural Manitoba hospitals (Portage La Prairie, Selkirk and Dauphin). These students were exposed to several different facets of medicine including: surgery, emergency medicine, mental health, dialysis, oncology and obstetrics. Three of these participants have since returned to the RMHMP as volunteer coordinators, to plan a unique rural experience for participants of the 2018-2019 cycle.

"RMHMP was such an incredible experience. I was able to see, first-hand, how teams of doctors, nurses and students worked together to provide care for their patients. This experience only strengthened my desire to work in health care." -Portage la Prairie, MB

Rural Exposure for Prospective Medical Students

According to the 2011 Canadian Census¹, the province of Manitoba is home to 1.2 million people, of which approximately 500 000 reside in rural areas. Given that almost 41% of Manitobans are rural dwellers there is an increasing need for rural physicians. A report from the Canadian Medical Association² found only 17.6% of family physicians and 3.1% of specialists practiced in a rural setting. Additionally, in 2010 there were 1022 patients per family physician and 1137 patients per non-primary care specialist in Manitoba overall³. Furthermore, a 2010 report from the Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine found that one in seven rural family physicians planned to move away from their communities within 2 years⁴ thus adding further stress to an already struggling system.

A rationalization of services to regional centres has been a predominant trend in rural Manitoba⁵. Subsequently, the ability of small communities to maintain quality delivery of service to their population has been negatively impacted. Compounded by the realities of time and distance, many rural communities lack adequate health care services and struggle to overcome the effects of the urbanization and centralization of care. Continuing challenges include supporting initiatives to effectively address the health and human resource needs of rural populations.

“The RMHMP revealed the diverse nature of rural medicine, and highlighted the various teams of the hospital. This program has opened my eyes to the vast number of health care professions and deepened my understanding of each of their roles. This has encouraged me to continue on the path to medicine.” - Selkirk, MB

Manitoba’s ORNH was established in 2002 and continues its commitment to the education and sustainability of rural and northern health care in Manitoba. This public health initiative focuses on developing and implementing long-term strategies, which will assist with recruitment and retention of health care professionals in rural and northern centres. The retention of rural physicians can be improved through increased exposure to rural healthcare in both frequency and duration⁶.

Moreover, the Canadian Medical Association found that extended training periods in rural settings are significantly correlated with an increase in residents indicating rural practice as a career interest. Interestingly, this trend also applies to students actively considering a career in medicine. As such, individuals with prolonged and frequent contact with rural areas are more likely to choose rural family practice.

Finally, the need for physicians who are committed to rural Manitoba and are community-minded continues to grow. The RMHMP and the ORNH continue to collaborate in the interest of inspiring prospective medical students to consider a dynamic and rewarding career in rural medicine.



References:

1. Statistics Canada, 2011. Population and dwelling counts, for Canada, provinces and territories, and census subdivisions (municipalities), 2011 and 2006 censuses.
2. Canadian Medical Association, 2011. Physicians Within and Outside Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) and Census Agglomerations (CA) - 2011.
3. Canadian Medical Association, 2011. Population per General Practitioner/Family Physician by Province/Territory, 1986-2010 and Population per Non-Primary Care Specialist by Province/Territory, 1986-2010.
4. Society of Rural Physicians of Canada, 2010. Rural Doctors call for Better Rural Health. SRPC: Shawville, QC.
5. University of Manitoba, 2006. Manitoba Medicine: Newsletter of the University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine and the Manitoba Medical College Foundation. Fall/Winter 2005/2006.
6. Canadian Medical Association, 2000. Rural and Remote Practice Issues. CMA Policy Statement.

The Future of the Rural Manitoba Health Mentorship Program

In 2018-2019, the Rural Manitoba Health Mentorship Program will enter its fourteenth year, jointly coordinated by three of last year's participants: Maziar Fazel-Darbandi, Jessica Levi and Kandace Law-Quon. Together, with the direction and supervision of the Office of Rural and Northern Health, the 2019 coordinators aim to attract students from rural Manitoba, in hopes they will pursue rural medicine in their future endeavours. The current coordinators are dedicated to the ongoing growth and success of the program.

For more information about the RMHMP and the 2019 application deadlines please visit:

Web: http://www.ornh.mb.ca/rural_manitoba_health_mentorship_program

Social Media: @RMHMP2019

Email: ruralhealthmentor@hotmail.com

"The RMHMP allowed me to gain a new appreciation for the challenges doctors face in a rural setting. Seeing how they overcame these obstacles and still provided care at a high level was inspiring, and motivated me to continue to work hard in my pursuit of working in the health care field." - Dauphin, MB