



Section of Rural Medicine

May 27, 2024

This Alberta Rural Health Week, let's remember our worth

Dear Members,

As many of you know, May 27 - 31 is Alberta Rural Health Week 2024, an annual event intended to honour the essential work done by rural health care providers and volunteers in communities across the province. This week, and every week, I want to extend my gratitude to each of you for everything you do to care for your patients and enrich your communities. The uniqueness of rural medicine and the critically important role we play in the health of our patients and the economic viability of our communities is something that can never be overstated.

Rural generalists and rural family physicians are more than health care providers – we are part of the communities where we live and work. Our patients are often our friends and neighbours, and we care for them and their families through life's most jubilant and most difficult moments. Many of us were raised in rural Alberta and chose rural medicine because we understood how integral it was to the communities where we lived. Many more of us were introduced to rural medicine in medical school, where we learned of the opportunities it would provide for us to develop a breadth and depth of knowledge that simply wouldn't be possible in an urban setting. As rural generalists, we care for patients in our community clinics and deliver specialized emergency medicine, internal medicine, palliative care, mental health, women's health, geriatric care, and addiction care, providing full scope, team-based, continuity of care. We are with our patients from birth to death, from home to the patient's medical home, to hospital and back. We are also the teachers who will help guide and inspire new generations of physicians to choose rural medicine.

Our patients count on us to provide care in their own communities, close to their friends and loved ones, but they also know they can rely on us to connect them to the specialized care that is only available in larger centres. We are their champions and their advocates, a responsibility we take seriously and one of the many reasons we are relentless in making sure elected officials understand that rural medicine is not to be taken lightly. Rural medicine is the backbone of rural communities, which are the kingmakers when it comes to deciding who will form and stay in government.

[The Rural Health Professions Action Plan \(RhPAP\) has put together some great suggestions](#) on how to help local communities celebrate the importance of rural medicine and the skilled professionals who deliver this essential care. Please share that information with your friends, neighbours and anyone who wishes to recognize this important event.

We must never forget how much we matter and the difference we make. As your SRM President, I remain committed to marketing our worth, marketing the uniqueness of rural medicine and achieving financial respect for our members. I am immensely grateful for all you do and for the opportunity to represent you. Thank you.

Regards,
Rithesh Ram
President, Section of Rural Medicine