

April, 2018

RE: Rural Road Map Implementation Committee struck to improve access to health care in rural Canada

Dear stakeholder,

This communiqué provides an update on progress that has been made since the launch of the Rural Road Map for Action (RRM) in February 2017. Reports have been shared from across Canada about initiatives the RRM has catalyzed. To support the implementation of the RRM the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) and the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada (SRPC) formed the Rural Road Map Implementation Committee (RRMIC) earlier this year. The RRMIC is designed to provide a forum whereby members can report and deliberate on how to further advance the RRM in ways that can be scaled and spread locally, provincially, and at a pan-Canadian level. The RRMIC will support the dissemination of success stories and discuss strategic opportunities to influence the broader uptake of the RRM.

The RRMIC held its inaugural meeting on February 1, 2018, in Mississauga, Ontario, at the CFPC National Office. Members in attendance included representatives from the CFPC, the SRPC, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada, the Canadian Medical Association, the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, HealthCareCAN, the Canadian Association for Rural and Remote Nursing, the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement, and the Canadian Association of Staff Physician Recruiters, as well as experts in rural and Indigenous health research. Members confirmed their commitment to **“work collaboratively to implement the RRM to improve access to safe, quality health care for rural Canadians close to home.”**

What comes next

Given the composition of its membership, the RRMIC is well positioned to influence health care systems, education systems, and governments in policy setting and decision making. To guide its next steps, the RRMIC conducted a priority-setting exercise based on the [Final Report – Summit to Improve Health Care Access and Equity for Rural Communities in Canada](#). The following are key activities the committee plans to pursue:

- **Practice-based activity:** Develop a strategy to advance accreditation standards for the timely transfer of patients in rural communities to improve quality of care
- **Education-based activity:** Provide a summary of work being done across Canada to advance rural and Indigenous health competencies in health professions education
- **Research-based activity:** Develop a pan-Canadian rural health care research strategy
- **Community-based activity:** Advance community engagement in rural health care delivery planning

- **Government/policy-based activities:**
 - Federal level: Develop a strategy to advance the RRM with rural and Indigenous caucus groups and create an approach for a pre-budget submission for the 2019 federal budget to support a rural health care and workforce strategy
 - Provincial/territorial level: Continue to establish an effective liaison relationship with the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committee on Health Workforce to support RRM advancement
- **Capitalize on opportunities for partnerships and funding**

By June 2018 the RRMIC members will finalize its work plan, which is to be completed by 2020.

How can stakeholders be involved?

The RRMIC feels strongly that collaboration is essential to the successful implementation of the RRM. Stakeholders have an essential role to play in identifying opportunities to share information about progress made and in providing advice and timely advocacy to advance education, policy, practice, and research activities related to rural health care in Canada.

We invite you to be engaged in and contribute to our collective work. If you have not already done so, please email at education@cfpc.ca to confirm your continued interest in receiving emails about our work and to indicate how you would like to participate.

We look forward to your ongoing involvement as we continue this journey to improve access to health care in rural Canada.

Ruth Wilson, MD, CCFP, FCFP
Co-Chair

James Rourke, MD, CCFP (EM), FCFP
Co-Chair