



GRAND ROUNDS

The local medical community took on an exceptionally youthful look last week.

Six first-year medical students were at Renfrew Victoria Hospital as part of the Eastern Regional Medical Education Program (ERMEP), giving them first-hand experience with local doctors and patients, and the full health care team.

Last week's six visiting students from Queen's and the University of Ottawa had a busy schedule, covering nearly every department from the emergency room to the continuing care unit and all points in between. They also spent time in local physicians' family practice settings.

Dr. Arthur Dick, who organizes the visits at RVH, explains the importance of the experience, noting that fewer than 30 per cent of today's medical students opt to go into family practice. Years ago, approximately 40 per cent of medical graduates pursued family medicine, and Dr. Dick says that number is required to meet the population's health care needs.

The enthusiasm of today's medical students gives Dr. Dick, and others in the health care planning field, hope for the future.

"I think that family practice is getting more popular again through these kind of programs," he comments, adding that it is now mandatory for all medical students to spend a week in a rural medical facility before entering their second year studies.

Even if they do opt to go into a specialized area of medicine, Dr. Dick notes that the week-long experience gives these future doctors a better understanding of the family practice role.

At the end of the week, Joanna Stanisz said the chance to work one-on-one with RVH's doctors had been invaluable.

That's the main goal of the program, to provide a unique opportunity to maximize and enhance medical students' learning experience through individual interactions.

"Getting to see how doctors practice medicine in a rural community has been very eye-opening," Stanisz reports.

Originally from Dundas, Ontario, she was impressed with the quality and the number of services available to patients in a small community like Renfrew.

While here for the week, she was also able to explore the area with her fellow Week in the Country students.

Stanisz reports that she particularly enjoyed the small-town atmosphere and being able to walk just about anywhere.

"Everything is very nice here," she concluded as her week in Renfrew came to an end.

She has the same to say about the doctors she shadowed and the people she met as patients at RVH.

"The hospital here serves such a wide area, you get to know all kinds of people from all over the place," she says.

Stanisz and her peers are still early on in their studies and have not yet decided which discipline of medicine they will pursue, so Dr. Dick is hopeful their Week in the Country will encourage them to seriously consider entering family practice, and doing it in Renfrew.

Local physician recruiter Barb Desilets agrees, noting that Dr. Dick, the local doctors and all staff involved in the Week in the Country experience deserved a round of applause for the effort that goes into making it a positive experience.



Left to Right: Joanna Stanisz, Wendy Zhang, Katherine Gushulak, Irene Ha, Varun Dev, Dr. Arthur Dick & Aneesh Chhabra shared a "Week in the Country" with the local health care community.

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