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We’re helping future doctors put down rural roots
Major scholarships awarded to encourage practice in rural areas

CALGARY – On Wednesday, October 4 at 1:30 p.m., the Alberta Medical Association’s (AMA’s) Section of Rural Medicine will present the Tarrant Scholarship to two Alberta medical students. One of Alberta's largest unrestricted medical school undergraduate awards, the Tarrant Scholarship is awarded to third-year medical students from the University of Alberta (U of A) and the University of Calgary (U of C) who have demonstrated a strong interest in focusing their medical career and undergraduate studies on rural medicine and related issues. The scholarship provides two scholarships of $12,500 each.

The 2017 Tarrant Scholarship recipients are University of Calgary medical student Ms Lauren Galbraith from Blairmore, Alberta and University of Alberta medical student Ms Taylor Nelson from High Level, Alberta.

“We always have strong candidates for this scholarship and this year is no exception,” said Dr. Tobias Gelber, President, AMA Section of Rural Medicine. “Rural medicine is incredibly fulfilling, but there are also challenges that urban physicians don’t see that must be faced every day. It’s inspiring to see the rural commitment of these bright, young and talented medical students. Like the Tarrant Scholarship winners who preceded them, Lauren and Taylor will be true assets to the rural communities in which they may choose to practice medicine.”

The scholarship is named in honor of the late Dr. Michael Tarrant, a Calgary family physician who championed rural medical undergraduate education.

Since its inception in 2004, the Tarrant Scholarship has been awarded to 35 medical students and provided over $375,000 to its recipients. Information about the scholarship is available at www.albertadoctors.org/about/awards/tarrant.

The ceremony will take place at the Willow Park Golf & Country Club, 639 Willow Park Drive SE, Calgary at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 4.

Biographies of our two winners follow, below.
Ms Lauren Galbraith  
University of Calgary

Lauren Galbraith was born and raised on a farm in rural Manitoba. Community engagement was a key component of rural life through participation in the 4-H Horse Club and public speaking, the local Rotary Club, sports such as hockey and soccer, youth group and much more. Prior to beginning medical school, Lauren worked as a medic in rural and northern Alberta (Peace River, Lubicon Lake First Nation and Drayton Valley), and went on to complete a Master’s of Science in Health Services Research at the University of Calgary.

As vice-president academic for the MD Class of 2018, Lauren has advocated for her colleagues on several academic issues, of which promotion of rural medical training programs has been one. She is an active member of the Rural Medicine Interest Group and strives to promote rural medicine at every opportunity.

At present, Lauren resides in Crowsnest Pass, where she is completing the University of Calgary Longitudinal Clerkship Program. The variety and complexity of rural medicine is what motivates and inspires her to pursue a career as a rural family physician. “A day in the life of a rural doc” recently had Lauren rounding on inpatients, then managing labor and delivering a baby, followed by a patient home visit and then afternoon clinic with prenatal visits, primary prevention discussions and minor clinic procedures.

Given her passion for rural and remote medicine, she has sought out rural placements for mandatory rotations, such as surgery in Lethbridge and obstetrics and gynecology in Yellowknife. Lauren’s passion for rural medicine is centered around relationships and caring for rural communities.

Lauren believes that when we truly understand where our patients come from, we are better suited to provide appropriate patient-specific care.

Ms Taylor Nelson  
University of Alberta

Taylor is a third-year medical student at the University of Alberta.

Taylor was born and raised in the small northern community of High Level. Her interest in medicine began when she completed work experience at the Northwest Health Centre in the 10th grade. She continued her partnership with the Northwest Health Centre in various positions (volunteer, intern and employee) throughout her years of study.

Throughout Taylor’s first two years of medical school, she participated in various Rural Medicine Interest Group activities such as clinical skills weekends and shadowing in rural communities.

For her third year, she has returned home to High Level as a participant of the Integrated Community Clerkship and her plan is to work in a northern rural community with a special interest in women’s and Indigenous health.
As well, she would like to complete additional training in obstetrics and gynecology to provide more services within her practice. She hopes that throughout her career she can make healthcare services more accessible to remote communities. Taylor has been inspired by many of the rural physicians who work in her home community who host clinics in the various surrounding communities so their patients do not need to travel in order to access the care they need.

- 30 -

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