FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 4, 2018

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

EDMONTON – On Thursday, 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 2018 Tarrant Scholarship recipients are University of Calgary medical student Wade Walters from Cardston and University of Alberta medical student Kirk Reid from Edmonton.

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 37 medical students and provided over $400,000 to its recipients. Information about the scholarship is available at www.albertadoctors.org/about/awards/tarrant.

The ceremony will take place at the U of A Faculty Club, 11435 Saskatchewan Drive in Edmonton.

Biographies of our two winners follow, below.
Kirk Reid  
*University of Alberta*

Kirk is a third-year medical student at the University of Alberta and was raised in St. Paul, Alberta. As he was growing up, Kirk took part in his family’s business and participated in many sports throughout school, including hockey, volleyball, soccer, basketball and others.

Throughout his youth, he developed a desire to help others and began volunteering and speaking at public events such as concert or sport event fundraisers. More recently, Kirk joined his older brother in the St. Paul Skate Park Initiative to fundraise and build a new skate park for St. Paul.

Their goal was to encourage healthy outdoor activities and hopefully take away from the allure of drugs and alcohol in their community.

Kirk began to shadow local doctors just after graduating from high school in order to gain exposure to the medical field while he did his bachelor’s degree in biological sciences.

In his first two years of medicine, he continued to shadow rural doctors and took part in clinical skill weekends in rural Alberta as part of the Rural Medicine Interest Group. As part of the Rural MD Ambassadors student group, he did presentations at rural schools to educate kids about how they could become rural doctors, and – more importantly – why they should.

As he progresses into his last two years of medical school, he plans to return to northern Alberta after completion of his training. He hopes to use his career to increase health advocacy and accessibility in rural communities and on Indigenous reserves.

Wade Walters  
*University of Calgary*

Wade is a third-year medical student at the University of Calgary who never imagined he would end up becoming a doctor.

After graduating from the University of Lethbridge with a degree in social studies education, Wade and his wife Amber moved their young family to Cardston where he took a job teaching junior and senior high school religion classes.

They fell in love with the community, settled on an acreage outside of town and their family grew to six children.

In addition to teaching, Wade was actively involved in the community. He is an ordained minister in his church, organized the first Cardston community food drive, chaired the Moses
Lake community clean-up committee and coached minor soccer and volunteered with Scouts Canada.

In 2012 Wade moved his family to Calgary where he taught religion courses as a chaplain at Mount Royal University for three years.

While his professional life in the city was very satisfying, they missed living in a rural community. After more than a decade of teaching, Wade applied to medical school with the goal of returning to Cardston as a rural family doctor.

Throughout school he has been a member of the Family and Rural Medicine Interest Group and has sought out rural family medicine electives in Lethbridge, Cardston, Stand Off, Raymond and Pincher Creek.

Wade and his family are currently living on a small farm back home in Cardston, where he feels very fortunate to spend his last year of school participating in the University of Calgary Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship program.

Wade plans to apply to the University of Calgary Rural Alberta South family Medicine Residency in the fall.

- 30 -

For more information or to request an interview, please contact:
Melissa Pennell
Manager, Public Affairs
Alberta Medical Association
melissa.pennell@albertadoctors.org