
February 27, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Your SRM Executive has been incredibly busy over the past few weeks as we continue to push for the recognition and respect rural medicine needs and deserves. We have met regularly with our government partners on initiatives that will improve access to health care for rural Albertans and strengthen the economic viability of rural communities.

We discussed some of this work during a session that we co-presented with Alberta Health at [Cabin Fever 2025](#), hosted by the Distributed Learning and Rural Initiatives program at the University of Calgary's Cummings School of Medicine. Our presentation focused on the [Rural Health Action Plan](#), where we discussed the factors shaping challenges in rural health care and the priority areas that need to be addressed. We explored what the term rural generalist means and explored the concept of geographic narcissism, which is a significant issue for medical schools, municipalities, the health system, patients and physicians. I have received excellent feedback on the session, which I co-presented with Brent McEwan, Executive Director, Rural Health, Alberta Health, and I look forward to moving ahead with this and other important initiatives.

I also wanted to draw your attention to a new pilot project that may be of interest to rural generalists who work in emergency departments. The AHS Digital Scribe, also known as 'Jenkins,' uses AI to transcribe physician conversations with patients and translates relevant details into medical notes that can then be copied into Connect Care. The project is being funded by the CMA's Health Care Unburdened Grant Program. I was onboarded last month and so far I am intrigued by its potential to reduce administrative burden and improve efficiency. If you are interested in learning about it, you can find more information [here](#).

As work on the PCPCM implementation continues, I want to reiterate the inadequacies in the model for full scope rural generalists as well as the ongoing challenges with AMA governance and the board that requires education from those of us who work in rural medicine. We encourage all rural physicians to become voting members or associate members of SRM, irrespective of their speciality, so they can benefit from our government relations and we can benefit from the unique knowledge of their discipline and their needs to manage rural Albertans.

On the subject of benefiting from your knowledge, earlier this month you received an invitation to complete the SRM survey that is gathering information on the issues that matter to you so we can advocate more effectively on your behalf. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete, and will be available until 11:59 p.m. on **Friday, March 7**. If you haven't completed it yet, you can find it [here](#).

As always, I want to thank you for all you do to make sure your patients receive the care they need in the communities they call home.

Regards,
Dr. Rithesh Ram
President, Section of Rural Medicine